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STARS OF THE STAGE
EDITED BY J. T. GREIN

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM

STARS OF THE STAGE

**A SERIES OF ILLUSTRATED BIO-
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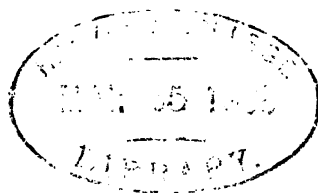
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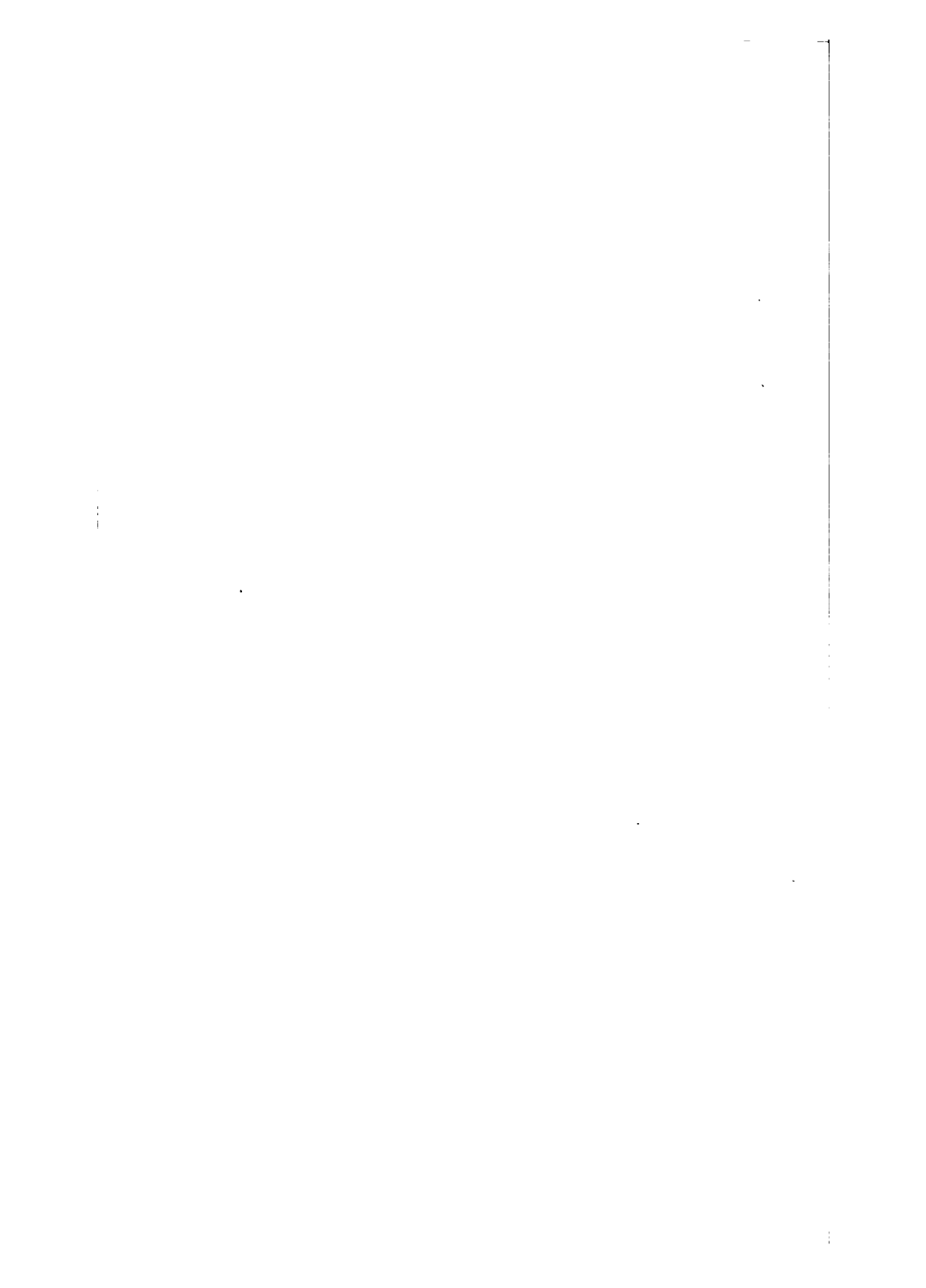
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SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM

SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM

CHAPTER I

"REPUTATION is in itself only a farthing candle, of wavering and uncertain flame, and easily blown out," wrote Lowell. The "farthing candle" might aptly be applied to many so-called present-day successes on the stage—successes which are oftentimes made in a single night and extinguished by the next comer. How often one hears such remarks as "Oh, I wonder what has become of So-and-so. We used to hear so much about him." But when the name of Sir Charles Wyndham is mentioned one is instantly reminded with what steadiness and brilliancy the flame of his popularity has burned for over forty years. It has never been affected by the newer or more startling lights that have suddenly flared out; it has never been overshadowed, or even dimmed. For over forty years his reputation has steadily grown and grown, until to-day there is no actor better known or more highly esteemed in England and America than Sir Charles Wyndham.

Charles Wyndham was born at Liverpool on March 23, 1837. His father was a doctor, and from the first destined his son for the same profession. That his son would ever become a great actor, famous

in England and America and on the Continent, certainly never even entered his mind. Charles was educated at home and abroad, spending part of his time in Germany and Paris. He was then sent to King's College, London, to be trained in the way his father wished him to go.

But the glamour of the stage was upon him : he could not settle down to the routine of a medical student's life. He approached his father and confided his longing to become an actor, but his father was horrified and tried to reason him out of it. At the same time it seems, in the light of Wyndham's own statement, that his father was largely responsible for this state of affairs. "I prepared myself for the medical profession," he said some years later, speaking of his early days, "and I should have got on rapidly in this profession if it had not been for my father. With my well-known predilection for the stage this indulgent parent of mine was careful to develop all the dramatic tendencies in my nature. He took me to a constant round of theatres. He even built a theatre in his home for me and introduced me to every actor in London. In those days for a son to tell his father that he wanted to become an actor was next door to saying that he wanted to become a burglar." One can only suppose that his father hoped that a close acquaintance with the stage would disillusion him, and perhaps it would have done so in the case of the ordinary stage-struck boy. Eventually the youth and his father came to a compromise. Charles was to work hard and

get his diplomas ; then he should be at liberty to choose with which profession he would throw in his lot. His father considered that with his diplomas gained he would then have a living at his finger ends, and if he cared to try the stage for a while he would have two strings to his bow. No doubt he also thought that with him, as with most young men, it was a passing fancy for a picturesque profession that close study and the passage of time would cure. In ninety-nine out of a hundred cases it would probably have been so, and the medical student would have settled down into a sedate physic-dealing country practitioner with a tolerant smile for his early aspirations and a good bedside manner. But England's premier comedian was not to be lost in this way.

Besides the little theatre in his father's house of which he speaks, Wyndham was indulging in other amateur acting and feeling his way at a bijou house near King's Cross, long since abolished, called the Cabinet Theatre. It must have been a strange company that trod those boards. Parts were not allotted in the order of merit, nor was suitability taken greatly into account. It was a question of pounds, shillings and pence, so much being paid for the right of playing Macbeth, for instance, or Claude Melnotte in the *Lady of Lyons*. Naturally it cost more to play "lead" than to buy a minor part, so that it became a question whether one could *afford* to play Hamlet or Romeo ! Such a remark as "how much for Othello ?" was not unheard of. It may be men

tioned in passing that a fellow aspirant at the Cabinet Theatre was William Blakeley, afterwards so closely connected with the famous actor manager at the Criterion.

Charles Wyndham awoke one day to find himself a qualified M.D. He had played a difficult and unsympathetic part successfully, and he had kept his bargain with his father. Although he was stage-struck he was sufficiently level-headed to weigh the "pros" and "cons" of the case carefully. And the "cons" in this case were considerable and not to be gainsaid. Although the limelight softened the edges and rounded the corners he could not fail to see them. The stage is notoriously a precarious profession and in those days it was by no means as well regulated or so highly esteemed as to-day. The capable actor is to-day honoured and respected—largely owing to the influence of such men as the late Sir Henry Irving and Wyndham himself—his art is received with serious attention, he is encouraged to do good work and produce good plays. All this was unknown in Wyndham's young days. The actor was more or less of a social outcast. He was expected to amuse, and amuse only just as a Punch and Judy show might do. If he failed to please he was made to feel a very humble servant of the public indeed. The outlook was not favourable to an actor who burned to do great things, and the young medical student realised this. Writing of that period of the stage's history a famous critic said, "I do not believe that ever before and certainly, according to my

experience, never since, has the English stage been in such a wretched down at heel, untidy and deplorable condition. I can scarcely describe the slovenliness with which plays were performed, or the ludicrous managerial methods adopted to illustrate modern comedy. Such a thing as nature was scarcely known on the stage." Perhaps the state of things can be more forcibly realised when it is remembered that Dickens writing some few years earlier in "Nicholas Nickleby," gave a wonderfully graphic sketch of the provincial manager and his company in Crummles and his family at Portsmouth. That this sketch did not create any particular sensation or outcry at the time shows that it was accepted by the public as a humorous presentment of a theatrical circuit company of that day. To-day the story of Nicholas's initiation into the company, his commission to write a play around a real pump and two washing tubs to suit the utility company, Miss Snevelicci's and his combined efforts to sell tickets by calling personally on the patrons of the drama, reads like uproarious farce or a flagrant caricature.

So it is not surprising to find that *materia medica* temporarily gained the day, and, the American Civil War breaking out at the moment, Wyndham determined to try his luck on the other side as an army surgeon. An army surgeon is several degrees more picturesque than a country practitioner, and Wyndham has always had an eye for the picturesque. His own account of his first experience in the land of the dollar is most amusing. Like the confident,

impetuous young man that he was, he set sail with the idea that he had only to offer his services for them to be eagerly and gratefully accepted. He would not hear of introductions; they were all very well in England, a land hampered by convention, but in the land of freedom none were needed. A proffered letter to General Banks was waived on one side: he was confident he could make his way for himself. But disillusionment awaited him; he found that the American Army was not on the look-out for a young surgeon from England, that other enthusiastic young men like himself were applicants for the vacancies, and strange to say in this land of equality the man with an influential introduction took the precedence of the unknown stranger! Day after day he wandered around, vainly offering his services. To add to his trouble, money began to run short, for his father, disapproving of the step he had taken, had cut off all supplies. A great deal of hope and forty-five dollars was all young Wyndham landed with. Forty-five dollars does not go a long way, and hope cannot be exchanged for food and drink. He was becoming depressed and nearly desperate when his luck turned. At Washington by a chance encounter at the hotel he was staying at, he made the acquaintance of the great showman Barnum, who took a fancy to the young man and allowed him to pour his troubles into his ears. "Why were you so foolish as to come without any introductions?" he said; "they are most necessary." Very crestfallen, Wyndham explained. It ended in



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM, AGE 18

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the great showman giving him a letter to General Banks—it was, indeed, a lesson to impetuosity—which secured Wyndham the appointment he desired.

It is not a pretty job to be an army surgeon in time of war, and anything less like his dreams of an artistic career can scarcely be imagined. It was a grim and painful experience. Speaking in 1899, at a banquet given by the London Eccentric Club, Wyndham made an eloquent appeal on behalf of the soldiers then fighting in South Africa, and in the course of his speech said : “Some stray records may have reached your ears of a time when, not with bayonet and rifle, but with bandages, probes and chloroform, I served with the Federal forces during the longest and most bitter conflict of modern days. Then I learned for the first time, and at first hand, what war really means, war—which if it does not make life worth the living, at least makes death worth the dying : whose sunlight is fame and glory : whose clouds are suffering and death in the fields—sorrow and want in the home—the home abandoned by the soldier at his country’s call. . . . I had opportunities of watching the soldier under every kind of circumstance, in fair weather and in foul—now flushed with victory, now grimly patient under reverse. I have heard his wild shout in the fury of onset, and watched him set his teeth in the stern quietude of desperate resistance.”

There is a photograph extant of Charles Wyndham in the garb of an army surgeon with a wide sombrero

hat on his head. The theatre-goer of to-day who thinks he knows the actor both on and off the stage would scarcely realise the eminent comedian in this portrait of a long-haired, bushy-whiskered and moustached man of twenty-seven. Under the growth of hair one misses the mobile, eloquent curves of the mouth which are among Wyndham's personal charms.

But he had too much imagination for life in the army to satisfy him for long. "On revient toujours à ses premiers amours," and very soon we find him in New York, once more treading the boards of a theatre, with the battle-field but not its memories far behind him. A curious interest attaches to his first engagement in America. John Wilkes Booth, whose name has been handed down to posterity as the assassin of President Lincoln, was a member of the company he joined. The ill-starred actor belonged to a famous theatrical family, his father being Junius Brutus Booth; Edwin Booth, best known of all, was his brother.

If Wyndham were relying too implicitly on the aphorism that "an actor is born not made," he was destined to be roughly enlightened. The moulding had only begun, he was but raw clay in the hands of the potter. He was "dismissed for incompetency"! Surely this is encouragement enough to the actor or actress who has fallen at the first hurdle!

Back to the Army and medicine once again. But not for long. In 1864 he made up his mind that the only thing for which he felt that he had a real vocation

and into which he could put his whole heart was acting. Mrs. John Wood was then opening at the Olympic Theatre, in New York, and with her he obtained an engagement. "In a painfully short space of time Mrs. Wood, like her predecessor, suggested my resignation. After one or two ineffectual attempts like these I came to the conclusion that America was not sufficiently advanced in art to appreciate me. I recrossed the water and offered my valuable services to English managers."

We will not follow Wyndham through the various small engagements in the provinces that followed, which though affording him valuable experience, were not particularly interesting. In November 1866, we find him in London, appearing in Burnand's once famous rollicking burlesque, *Black-Eyed Susan*, at the Royalty Theatre. The clever Patty Oliver was the actress-manager, herself appearing in the title-role, and she was supported by such well-known men and women as James Danvers, Fred Dewar, Nellie Bromley, and Fanny Heath. Sir Francis Burnand gives a description of the production of this play in his "Records and Reminiscences." He describes the spirit with which the whole thing went from start to finish; the success of the song, "Pretty See-usan, don't say No"; and mentioning Wyndham, writes: "Charles Wyndham was a wonderful dancer, and however nonsensical might have been what he had to do, he was thoroughly in earnest in doing it." It will come, no doubt, as a surprise to many to learn that Wyndham once rollicked and

danced in a kind of musical comedy, but that the actor and actress who wishes to appear graceful and natural on the stage should learn dancing is a theatrical axiom. It is not uninteresting to note that other actors besides Wyndham, who have developed into leading comedians, learnt more than a little of their art on the burlesque stage, notably Lady Bancroft, Edward Terry, and Alfred Bishop. Both Sir Charles Wyndham and Mr. Terry acknowledge gratefully the splendid assistance that such experience has been to them when they devoted themselves to more serious work. It is a branch of dramatic art in which amateurishness cannot survive; the slipshod, badly-equipped actor stands no chance in burlesque.

The original play by Douglas Jerrold which Burand burlesqued must have been well nigh irresistible for this purpose, for it was appropriated by many people. *Harlequin Black-Eyed Sue*, *Too-Lonely-Black-Ey'd Susan*, *William and Susan*, and *Black-Eyed Sukey*, were only a few of the travesties besides that in which Wyndham acted.

Another unfamiliar portrait of Wyndham with a beard and moustache and a turned down collar shows him in his next engagement, *Idalia* at St. James' Theatre, a member of Miss Herbert's company. The play was founded on Ouida's novel of the same name and is chiefly remarkable for a series of absurd first night mishaps that have become notorious. One of Wyndham's fellow actors was Henry Irving, then also standing on the threshold of his great career.



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AS AN ARMY SURGEON, AGE 27
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say that the awe of the situation was fading ? Now came my turn. Standing on a platform behind the scene from the commencement, I had seen what had happened to my two friends, so, stepping gingerly upon the bridge, I arrived on the stage without sitting down, had my encounter with the two ruffians, escaped from them, had run wildly up the bridge again to receive the shot from Count Falcon's pistol, and had fallen, according to the stage manager's instructions, a foot or so below the treacherous spot. On came Idalia—she had heard the shot. 'Ah ! a body on the bridge !' She runs down ; recognises me—'Great heaven, 'tis he !' rushes further down, reaches the fatal place, away go her arms, and—well, she sat down, the folds of her dress falling over me and completely hiding me from the view of the audience. That was the end of the act—it was a powerful one. We had all done our level best, but the waterfall had scored the most, to the delighted amusement of a laughing audience." Later on in the third act, the treacherous waterfall again took its part. The hero—Wyndham—is supposed to be dead, but needless to say, he is not. He rushes madly across the stage to enfold his true love in his arms. "'Idalia,' I exclaimed, 'I never expected to see you again !' reached one of those rivulets that had trickled in exactly the same direction that I was going—reached it unknowingly—slipped, and—well, I sat down. Need I go on ? . . . Need I tell you that, in the last act, the actors had become, through sheer helplessness, as demoralised as the audience—

At I assured my love, in a voice smothered with laughter, that nothing would shake my firmness of belief in her—that she chuckled out she believed—or that Irving came on to die in a white shirt, a good red spot on his breast, and his face all grins, giving the most facetious death actor ever died?”

It was indeed an unlucky first night, and on an occasion like this, the agony of the unhappy, helpless dramatist can be better imagined than described, for he is forced to see the work of months dissolved in a guffaw of laughter before his very eyes.

Playgoers in 1867 heard with the greatest regret the imminent retirement of Miss Kate Terry. She played a “farewell” season in Manchester, for which she requisitioned the services of Wyndham. The revival of *Still Waters Run Deep*, at the Queen’s Theatre, saw him back again in London. It is interesting to note that Mrs. Mildmay was played by Miss Ellen Terry, and in the part of that clever scoundrel, Captain Hawkesley, Wyndham made a distinct hit. A further notable addition to the company was made at the end of the year, when Henry Irving joined them, and when in the next year J. L. Toole was also engaged, there was no better company in London. Fancy a cast that comprised such a theatrical galaxy as Ellen Terry, Charles Wyndham, Lionel Brough, John Clayton, Henry Irving, and Toole! This was the cast for one of Byron’s plays, *Deerheart than Life*. Nowadays in spite of such acting would not be tolerated for a moment, with its sawkish sentimentality and sham domesticity.

Henry Byron delighted in puns and word twistings. He was an amazingly prolific writer, and a mere glance at the list of his plays fills the beholder with astonishment.

But soon afterwards London lost Wyndham for a time. America called to him again, and he recrossed the Atlantic in search of fresh laurels. There he repeated his London successes, winning golden opinions from every one. How different to his first arrival in New York, when he button-holed every body he met to ask them if they knew where he could obtain a berth as an army surgeon ! Now, every one began to talk of Charles Wyndham, such was his success that he could fill America's largest theatres. A strange and startling experience befell him in the great fire of Chicago : the theatre in which he was to have opened for a three months' season was burned to ashes, and the actor and his company found themselves stranded in a burnt-out city. But Wyndham overcame this difficulty and they were soon at work again. Altogether, the visit was a great success. In some of the towns in America, particularly in the West, Wyndham found the theatres run in a rather rough, haphazard fashion, and he and his company endured a good many hardships. Also they found the excessive travelling very uncomfortable and tiring.

No doubt, he was glad to find himself home again in 1873, and soon after that we find him playing in one of his greatest successes, a play that everybody has heard of and not a few have seen, *Brighton*. It

was revived by Wyndham as late as 1891, and he has played Bob Sackett all over England and America. This three-act farce was originally produced in America under the name of *Saratoga*, and to Frank Marshall was entrusted the task of making it acceptable to an English audience. He located the scene in Brighton, and thus the play gained its name. Bob Sackett, the hero of this dashing farce, is a handsome, rollicking young fellow who runs after every pretty girl he meets. He is a very gay dog indeed, and is ever trembling on the edge of matrimony. He proposes at frequent intervals to different girls, all of whom accept him. It is a case of "how happy could I be with" not "either," but "any." His inflammable heart is never at rest! It is always bursting with emotion for the fair sex. Naturally this gay, thoughtless dog gets into endless scrapes which threaten to overwhelm him at any moment, but by the exercise of his personal charms and irresistible lightheartedness he eventually wriggles out of them all. This part was admirably suited to Wyndham's methods and his success is not to be wondered at. One writer of that date said: "Upon sheer animal spirits and nothing else does the success of *Brighton* depend. It is one rattle the whole way through, and without such a voluble, excited and impulsive actor as Mr. Wyndham, *Brighton* would be useless. . . . The comedy flags when he even pauses for breath. It is a dazzle and a flash, and Mr. Wyndham is the rocket."

Frank Marshall had lent the play many sparkling

witticisms and *bon mots* whilst retaining all the breeziness and "go" of the original. It is not an easy task to convert a very American play into the British article, but he accomplished his task well. The girls in the piece were meant to be types of the then "advanced women," like the girls in Pinero's *Amazons*. But they have been caught up and overtaken long, long ago, and in the last revival seemed the tamest of fireside women. *Brighton* ran merrily for a long time, and for many years afterwards whenever Wyndham was in doubt as to what theatrical card to play, he fell back on a revival of his old friend Bob Sackett and always found it trumps.

In December 1875, we find him still playing *Brighton*, this time at the Criterion Theatre which he was to make famous. But that's another chapter!

CHAPTER II

CRITERION DAYS

WHEN Wyndham opened at the new Criterion Theatre with the ever popular favourite, *Brighton*, he certainly could not have foreseen that he would remain there for twenty-three years—a long period in the world of the theatre, where literally managers and actors are “here to-day, and gone to-morrow.” A frequent change of address is no reproach in this world ; it is only to be expected. If it be true that variety is the spice of life, actors and actresses must find no lack of flavour in their daily bread : but it may be permitted us to wonder if they do not sometimes sigh for less highly flavoured food, and look with a mild longing at other professions where a man hangs up his hat on the same peg in the same office from the year’s beginning to the year’s ending. Just as the commercial traveller knows that catching trains and sleeping in strange quarters enters largely into his scheme of things, so does the actor accept frequent change of house as his lot in life. But Wyndham did not know that he was “settling down” for a long term of years at the snug little playhouse under the Criterion restaurant.

That a manager or actor can become attached to a theatre just as the ordinary householder becomes

attached to certain bricks and mortar was proved by Wyndham's speech on the occasion of his leaving the Criterion. On this occasion he said: "To this theatre, wherever my footsteps may wander, will revert my tenderest memories, and not only my tender memories, but also my business solicitude, for although I shall not be in the future its regular physical occupant, I am happy to say I still remain its regular lessee and manager. Thus you see I do not follow the adage that 'it is better to be off with the old love before you are on with the new'; I believe in being on with both, and I shall treat them with equal fairness. The new love shall have most of my companionship, the old love most of my thoughts, and both all my devotion. Neither shall have cause to be jealous of the other. What Stella and Vanessa were to Swift my two loves shall be to me. Nor need the old love at this present separation fear permanent desertion. Let her console herself. *On revient toujours à ses premiers amours.*" Charles Wyndham was not its first tenant, although it was hardly out of its infancy—being only eighteen months old—when he undertook its management. During the time it had been opened it had not justified the confidence of Messrs. Spiers and Pond, the owners, for one play after another proved a failure, and actors began to look askance at it. It is curious how occasionally for a length of time a certain playhouse is regarded as unlucky. Once it gets this reputation it is hard to shake it off, for managers and actors are notoriously rather super-

stitious, and prefer to rent a house with a more cheerful reputation. But, as was proved in the case of the Criterion, when a first-class company appears in a really good play, it draws the public, who know nothing of "unlucky houses," but have an invincible predilection for good plays, well performed. After all, the play's the thing. *Brighton* was preceded by *The First Night*, an adaptation of *Le Père de la Débutante*. It is interesting to note that the performance commenced at 7.30, the usual hour in those days. The playgoer demanded quantity as well as quality, and did not linger so long over his coffee and liqueur.

Brighton went on merrily in its new home as it had done in its old one, and, after a very successful run, Wyndham, borrowing from France, presented *The Great Divorce Case*. The bills announced that the play had been adapted from *Le Procès Veraudieux*, by John Doe and Richard Roe. Only a few people knew on its production that "John Doe" hid the identity of Clement Scott, who so often had occasion to criticise the actor-manager in plays that were not his own. The cast was an admirable one, and included Edward Righton, John Clarke, Miss Nelly Bromley, and Miss Eastlake, whom playgoers will remember as an unexpectedly good Ophelia.

The play was hailed as an exceptionally funny farce, gaining many a hearty laugh. The two men in the piece are both the victims of a suspicious mother-in-law. They confide their trouble to one another, and are indignant at the treatment they

receive for no sufficient cause. They naturally object to being punished for sins they have never committed. This leads to the bold resolution of for once having a night out, and being really "gay dogs." They arrange to dine at Blanchard's, go to a skating rink afterwards, and finish up at Cremorne. In order to blind their suspicious relations and to facilitate their escape from domestic bliss, they agree that each shall send the other a letter suggesting a quiet dinner at a small restaurant in order that they may fully discuss *The Great Divorce Case*. The rest of the story can easily be imagined. Wyndham was particularly good as one of the mother-in-law ridden husbands. His nervous dread of her interference, and his embarrassment in the second act when she appears, convulsed the audience, while the whole play went with spirit and verve from the rising to the fall of the curtain.

Hot Water and *On Bail* belong to the same class of play, and also were received with favour by the Criterion clientèle.

The production of *The Pink Dominoes* in the spring of 1877 caused a shaking of heads and a wagging of tongues outside the theatre and many hearty laughs inside. Many of those who laughed the loudest on the first night found themselves on mature reflection unable to approve of the play in the morning. Nowadays it is difficult to realise that *Pink Dominoes* was considered by many as "not quite nice!" One critic asserted that "there is much in *The Pink Dominoes* which must be painful where it is not



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN "STILL WATERS RUN DEEP"
From a photograph by Messrs. Barraud & Robertson

inexplicable to any modest lady amongst the audience," but adds solemnly, "its outcome is good, since vicious tastes are held up to ridicule, and their attempted gratification rendered abortive." To present such a play was, of course, somewhat of an innovation for Wyndham. The Palais Royal type of farce was not then so common in London as it is to-day. Mr. Albery—Miss Mary Moore's clever husband and the author of *Two Roses*—was responsible for its adaptation. The ingenious construction of the piece was French, but much of the wit and brightness belonged to Albery. The play turned on the desire of two wives to test their husbands, which they do by sending them anonymous notes making appointments for Cremorne Gardens. How far the mention of Cremorne carries one back! To the present generation the word only recalls some of Whistler's wonderful canvases. The fun was well kept up, and it was infinitely better than many of the imported farces that have since reached our shores. The plays that one's wives and sisters ought not to see are apt to be amusing, and have before now made fortunes for their producers. *The Pink Dominoes* proved a distinct money-maker. No doubt the controversy and the head-shaking had a great deal to do with this. Like the old lady who was being converted to temperance, many went to see "what nasty stuff it was" and failed to sign the pledge of total abstinence. Indeed, it was a very harmless, amusing farce, and deserved its success. Wyndham was excellent in the part of one of the

conspired-against husbands, and his acting in his touch and go style was the talk of the town. People began to realise what an admirable comedian he was. Miss Eastlake was again in the cast, and Augustus Harris, who afterwards became the well-known manager of Drury Lane, played the part of Harry Greenlanes.

We cannot, unfortunately, review all of Wyndham's ventures at the Criterion, interesting as they were, but select some of his better known pieces. *Where's the Cat* was another adaptation—this time a loan from Germany. In the cast we find Mr. Beer-bohm Tree and Mrs. John Wood. It will be recalled that it was once Mrs. John Wood who engaged Wyndham as a member of her company and dismissed him for incompetency. It was much the rollicking sort of farce that the public had come to expect from Wyndham. In view of the oft expressed opinion that the actor of to-day is more often than not a raw amateur, the following notice of *Where's the Cat* seems to show that the same lamentation was not unknown in 1880. "It might almost be maintained that the preposterous farce to which the piece belongs serves a purpose since it compels our young actors to get out of that species of amateurish quietude which is now too common on the stage. We fear to state how large a proportion of modern actors are no more than fairly competent and intelligent amateurs." But preposterous or not, Wyndham had by this time educated his public into liking this type of play. His mercurial,

light-hearted heroes were the order of the Criterion. As long as he had plenty to do in the piece, and the plot was not too complicated, his public was pleased. If there was an unpleasant side to any of these "Palais Royal" farces, Wyndham never brought it into prominence, but on the contrary, by his gay good humour and irresponsibility, succeeded in toning down and making acceptable what the public under other circumstances might have frowned at. If Wyndham was always a "gay dog" and by no means a model of suburban life, he was always a nice dog, with his heart in the right place; and if not always on his best behaviour, his manners were always those of the drawing-room. *Where's the Cat* was not an epoch-making play or even specially interesting. The fun seems to have been of a very primitive order, as the following extracts will show. Mr. Tree asks the lady with whom he is acting Mrs. John Wood, "Have you any children?" To which she replies "My cousin presented me with three." The servant maid in the piece, the simple-minded, unsophisticated girl beloved of dramatists, amused the house by saying, "Please, ma'am, I'm so frightened, I don't know whether I'm on my head or my heels!" To which the landlady returns severely, "No decent woman should be in doubt about such a subject as that"; and when the servant at last gasps out, "The master's regularly turned me upside down," the climax of the fun is reached.

Betsy, a play which drew all London, and which many people associate with Wyndham, was pro-

duced at the Criterion during one of his tours in the provinces, he superintending its production, although he did not himself take any part in it. Here we may pause to pay a tribute to Wyndham's wonderful stage management. A well-known actor once said that "to watch Charles Wyndham conduct a rehearsal is to gain a liberal education in the art, craft, and subtle science of stage management." It is a well-known truism that an actor is born, not made, and this might be applied to the stage-manager with equal truth. Though stage management cannot make a play, it is not too much to say that it can "unmake" it. In a successful production the stage-manager gets little praise or notice. If it is done well, everything is taken for granted, and if it is done badly, it is instantly remarked upon and criticised. The public has always taken for granted that Wyndham is a good stage-manager, because his plays always run so smoothly and naturally. Although there is no straining after effect, or novel effects of lighting, his pieces have always been exceedingly well staged. Speaking of him once, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones said that he supposed "that of all the things that were constantly misunderstood in regard to the modern English theatre and the allied but not identical institution, the British drama, none were more misunderstood than the difficult question of how far the author had vitalised a certain character, or scene or situation, and how far the actor had vitalised it. Charles Wyndham had a magnetic personality, an abundant vitality, that

impregnated every part he played, but there was also a natural gaiety and ease which not only made every character he played alive and real, but also made it attractive and welcome. By careful training and practice, his technique was unsurpassed by any living actor." He concluded by speaking most highly of Wyndham's ability as a stage-manager. An actor who had served under him for many years summarised the whole thing. "He knows his business thoroughly. There is no hesitation or shilly-shallying; he knows what he wants, and he sees that it is done. There is no amateurishness about Charles Wyndham. His company know that he has the business at his finger ends, and put implicit faith in him. If he sets his mind on some particular effect there is no trouble too great that he will not take to encompass his ends. It is a pleasure to work under such a stage-manager as Sir Charles." Wyndham admitted quite recently that "rehearsing a new play is to me no labour. It is less exacting, strange as it may seem to you, than appearing in public. I love it. My interest in that work is so great that I have often rehearsed a piece in which I have no direct interest. The development of idea and character are pleasant to follow: it is pleasant to follow them in others. When I retire from the stage I may at least have that resource."

Foggerty's Fairy was originally written by Mr. W. S. Gilbert to suit Sothorn, who hoped until the very last days of his fatal illness to present it to the public. But this was not to be, and after his death

it passed into the hands of Wyndham. Sothorn had firmly believed in it, and so did Wyndham, but on being produced it fell somewhat flat, and in spite of its feast of wit and sparkling repartee the guests who were bidden did not come. It was withdrawn after a very short run. Of Wyndham's performance in this a well-known critic wrote : "It often happens that an actor plays better than he has ever done before in an unsuccessful play, and this was unfortunately the case with Mr. Wyndham and *Foggerty's Fairy*." The idea of the play was ingenious enough, as might be expected from Mr. Gilbert. The hero, realising that the effects of a false step are irrevocable, in despair appeals to a fairy to free him from the consequences that threaten to mar his future happiness. The fairy consents, and in order to free him causes the whole memory of the blunder to pass from his mind, thereby leaving a blank in his life which naturally gives rises to all sorts of amusing incidents. Another set of events is substituted for those which have been obliterated, and which in their turn prove just as awkward in their consequences. The story in its various complications proved too perplexing for the ordinary playgoer, who prefers not to go through brain gymnastics after dinner. He found it witty and clever, but he could not follow the story ; he thought the acting excellent, but the plot preposterous. Clement Scott, who read the play seated comfortably in an arm-chair by the fireside, roared with laughter over it, and so did many others who were permitted



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN "WILD OATS"
From a photograph by the London Stereoscopic Coy.



to peruse it. On this occasion Wyndham shared the honours of the acting with Mrs. John Wood, Mr. George Giddens, and Miss Mary Rorke.

In 1883 some renovations and alterations in the Criterion being deemed necessary by the authorities, Wyndham took the opportunity—not to rest, he has always been too energetic for that—to revisit America. On his return after a most successful season, he opened the Criterion with his old favourite *Brighton* once more. But he was studying a new part, viz., Viscount Oldacre, in *The Candidate*, by Mr. Justin Huntly McCarthy. For this play he surrounded himself with a notably good cast, for Wyndham has always believed in filling all the parts, whether large or small, with the best available talent. He has never presumed on his “star” capacity to fill a theatre, or practised the false economy which suggests that if one or two of the actors are good, the rest may be inferior. He has always taken as much care in selecting an actress for the ten-word part of a servant as in casting the larger parts. Charles Kean’s idea of an “ideal company”—namely “himself, Ellen, and a *corps de ballet*”—has never commended itself to the mind of Wyndham. The right man in the right part has always been his motto. This and his keen attention to every detail, however small, made the Criterion pieces famous in the days when such care was by no means common. Wyndham has never presented any slipshod, under-rehearsed play to the public, and the public has been quick to appreciate the compliment

he paid it. When the Comédie Française company first visited London, they opened the eyes of the London playgoer by their finish and clockwork accuracy, but long before this time Wyndham had been striving in his own way to reach the same standard of excellence.

The Candidate found immediate favour. It has been said that it is not so much the eulogistic notice which makes a play or a book, but dinner table talk and club chatter. If a manager can produce a play which stimulates discussion and is talked about in the smoking room, at supper parties, at five o'clock tea, and over the breakfast table, he is a happy man. "Oh I have you seen So-and-so's play? It's splendid—you *must* go and see it," does far more to fill a theatre than any amount of good notices. There are still a number of people in the world who never read notices of books or plays, and scarcely know the names of our leading dramatists and writers, but will, like the insatiable novel reader at the circulating library, take the advice of the attendant or lean on the opinion of a friend in such matters.

At the moment *The Candidate* was produced political feeling ran high, and both Radicals and Conservatives found their politics "ready made and to hand" in this amusing play. The adventures of Viscount Oldacre and Mr. Baffin, his secretary, at Easthampton, were the talk of the town. Politicians buttonholed one another in the Lobby to laugh over it before attending to serious business.

Oldacre, it will be remembered, was one of the bluest of blue blood Conservatives, and Alaric Baffin a Radical of the deepest dye. Baffin wins the election at Easthampton for Oldacre as a *Radical*. The dialogue was bright and witty, and the whole idea of the play admirably carried out. It seems curious to us to read what was written on its production. "It would be dangerous to take the principle of *The Candidate* as a precedent. The authorities should be very chary of permitting new plays of a similar pattern. It is hard enough to be lampooned and libelled in the semi-theatrical, semi-sporting prints, which indulge in weekly mendacity, and are let alone simply because they are beneath contempt, and another to have these falsehoods forced upon the stage by any anonymous coward who cares to turn dramatist. The law of libel could easily silence the wretched crew that crow so loudly behind their office desks and whine so pitifully when they are dragged into court, and it is to be hoped that a strong check will be placed upon further personalities in connection with the stage." The writer seems to have been born without the bump of humour, but with the gift for using forcible language.

The Candidate was revived quite recently, but the salt had lost its savour, and the play was voted old-fashioned. So true it is that the humour of one generation is the derision of the next.

At the conclusion of the run of *The Candidate*, Wyndham, who for some time had been anxious to

strike, as it were, another note, let his thoughts revert to an old love, *Wild Oats*. At a very early stage in his career he had played the part of Rover at the Royalty Theatre, and parted from it regretfully. Why should he not revive it? The part of the wild, devil-may-care yet good-hearted Rover had always appealed to him irresistibly. It had been a favourite, too, with Samuel Phelps, who, it is said, played it to perfection. Rover, a strolling player, has in his time played many parts. Quotations from the various plays come more naturally to his lips than a simpler form of speech, and he is thus ever quoting from well-known comedies or declaiming lines from famous dramas. He is mistaken for a young man of quality who has run away from school to join the players, and in this way makes the acquaintance of a fair Quakeress, Lady Amaranth, to whose heart he successfully lays siege. *Wild Oats* is not literature, it is not life, but it is what is known as an actor's play. It is a thing of flourishes and bravura passages, a little highly coloured in parts like a child's painting copy, but perhaps all the more cheerful and attractive to the general public on that account. Rover is a distinctly "sympathetic" character, and many of the other parts are scarcely less good, notably Ephraim Smooth, Sir George Thunder, Jane and Lady Amaranth. *Wild Oats*, besides serving to bridge over the chasm between broad farce and the lighter forms of comedy-drama in Wyndham's career, is interesting for another reason. It was the commencement of

his association with Miss Mary Moore—she was Lady Amaranth. In the delightfully quaint costume of a Quakeress she was all that is pretty and dainty, while her acting charmed every one. Yet she was not a finished or even an experienced actress; her knowledge of the stage was at that time extremely limited. She was, in fact, just starting on the career which has for so many years been bound up with that of Sir Charles Wyndham. So, taken altogether, the revival of *Wild Oats* in 1886 was an interesting point in his career. He now showed the public he could do something better than broad farce, that with encouragement he would give them light comedy, and in the following production, *David Garrick*, he made an immense stride forward and stamped himself as a comedian of the highest order. To play Sothern's great part was a bold step for him to take, but boldness was never better justified.

Wyndham's *David Garrick* has been for many years so great a favourite with the public and has been played to such record houses and under such distinguished patronage that it has seemed well to devote a chapter entirely to it.

After *David Garrick* came F. C. Burnand's *Headless Man*. In his "Records and Reminiscences" Sir Francis tells its history; "I had hit upon a first-rate eccentric character. The idea for the hero of the comedy was 'a man with a method'; a man who considered himself so methodical that he was always lecturing others on the advantages of his own system

as compared with their negligent way of doing business, while in reality there never was such a muddle-headed person as this monomaniac." But although Sir Francis had several good characters and situations ready to hand, he could not get a plot to fit, and for this requisitioned the help of George Rose. They wrote up the chief part in the play for Charles Mathews, then over seventy years of age, who in spite of his years was immensely taken with the idea of the part and anxious to play it. It is doubtful if he could have studied it, but he was never put to the test, for death claimed him. The authors then offered it to Sothorn, who accepted it. Before it could be produced, however, a misunderstanding arose between the actor and Sir Francis, and Sothorn returned the play in dudgeon. For a time it seemed as if the piece were not to be produced at all. Then one day in the course of conversation with Charles Wyndham, Sothorn mentioned *The Headless Man*, what a capital play it was, concluding with the remark that Wyndham ought to produce it. It proved to be an artistic but hardly a popular success, though many people remember with pleasure Wyndham's performance as Sam Hedley. It seems to have suffered from the same fault as the work of that other brilliant writer, W. S. Gilbert's *Foggerty's Fairy*. Mr. William Archer wrote regarding the play: "The working out is a trifle too complex for my poor understanding. The business of the photographs and the portman-teaux bewilders me like thimble-rigging or the three card trick," but adds, "it is not in the least essential



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AND MISS MARY MOORE IN "SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER,"
From a photograph by Messrs. Barraud & Robertson



that any one should fully unravel these complications. The whole point of the piece lies in the delightful inconsequences of Sam Hedley, and these Mr. Wyndham delivers with a light-hearted conviction which renders them quite irresistible. It is no derogation to Mr. Wyndham's more serious powers to say that he remains easily first among the light comedians of this generation."

A curious incident occurred on the first night of *The Headless Man*, which must have led to a hatless man being seen in Piccadilly at midnight. At the end of the play there was the usual booing from the gallery, which seemed to be led by a man who did not disapprove of the play, but was exceedingly annoyed because programmes were charged for. When Wyndham came forward to say a few words he repeatedly interrupted him with his grumbles on this score. Wyndham thereupon made a humorous reference to him as "the man with the white hat" in the front row of the gallery. The following morning the theatre cleaner came to Mr. Henderson in his office bearing the identical white hat, which she had found in the middle of the front row of the gallery, not under the seat or in a casual position, but *planté là*. How the hat came to be there is like many things in life, "wropt in mystery." The play ran for about six months.

On May 10, 1890, Wyndham rode full tilt against the classicists in his presentment of *She Stoops to Conquer*. They held up their hands in indignation at the "modernising" to which the play had been

subjected, and no doubt suffered severely as each interpolation and substitution fell on their sensitive ears. They deprecated bitterly the modern spirit in which it was played, and sadly went home to re-read their Goldsmith by their own fireside, where the stage doth not corrupt or actors break through and steal. In the controversy that subsequently arose Wyndham himself took a part. "How am I," he protested, "to cast the mantle of antiquity over the antics of Tony Lumpkin? How am I to laugh without a nineteenth-century ring in my voice, or by what alchemy can I stay the trickling of the anachronistic tear?" Mr. Walkley, on the side of the classicists, pointed out that "none could play Goldsmith better than Mr. Wyndham if he would but treat Goldsmith's lighter moods a little less in the spirit of Palais Royal farce, and his heavier moods with a little less of the hysteric fervour of David Garrick. . . . I admire Mr. Charles Wyndham as well as they (the Criterion public), but

I could not love thee, Charles, so much
Loved I not Goldsmith more."

He further reminded Wyndham that "it is not a go-as-you-please competition. Nor is it the Caucus race in 'Alice in Wonderland.' . . . You are playing an artificial play, written for an artificial age. Be then yourselves artificial." He praised Wyndham's rendering of Marlow's first interview with Miss Hardcastle, on the grounds that he has exactly the right artificiality; and finds fault with their last

scene because they both become hysterically sincere. Perhaps there was a trace of Bob Sackett in the ease with which young Marlow rattled off his speeches, and a hint of *Pink Dominoes* in certain interpolated repartees, but on the whole it was an enjoyable production, in spite of the reminiscences thrown in. It is unnecessary to say that Wyndham looked charming, for as every playgoer knows he is one of the very few actors who take one back through the centuries, wearing antique costumes as though to the manner born. In this connection, who can help remembering the late William Terriss and the inimitable grace and ease with which he played costume parts.

It was made a cause of complaint against George Giddens that he showed Tony Lumpkin as retaining the manners of a gentleman despite his frequenting of the village alehouse and mixing on familiar terms with roystering boon companions. This seems unfair to Mr. Giddens, who surely read the part quite rightly and played it as Goldsmith himself would have wished him to do. It would be as fair to suggest that Prince Hal had lost all semblance of princeliness because he consorted with Falstaff and his fellows.

The revival of *London Assurance* in November of the same year need only be mentioned on account of the acting talent with which Wyndham surrounded himself. A cast which includes such names as William Farren, Arthur Bouchier, Cyril Maude, Miss Mary Moore, and Mrs. Bernard Beere cannot be altogether overlooked. The play itself has some

fine touches of bombast, and was not worthy of the players. A single quotation suffices. Grace Harkaway is speaking : " I love to watch the first tear that glistens in the opening eye of morning, the silent song that flowers breathe, the thrilling choir of the woodland minstrels, to which the modest brook trickles applause : these, swelling out the sweetest chord of sweet creation's matins, seem to pour some soft and merry tale into the daylight's ear, as if the waking world had dreamed a happy thing, and now smiled o'er the telling of it." In this play one is reminded that in 1841, the date of the play, the habit of the after dinner cigar was only in its infancy. Cool, in speaking of a man he knew, remarks that he " faints at the smell of one," and speaks of the smoking of cigars as a " vice." Brandy punch, Madeira, and Burgundy (very often drunk immediately after breakfast) were the order of the day, and responsible for several of the characters " coming home with the milk " and their subsequent headaches.

Passing over such productions as *The School for Scandal*—Wyndham made an altogether admirable Charles Surface—*The Fringe of Society*, an adaptation of *Le Demi Monde* of Dumas fils, and *The Silent Battle*, we come to a group of Henry Arthur Jones's plays, the first of which, *The Bauble Shop*, was produced on January 26th, 1893.

Mr. Jones had given playgoers a taste of his very best in *The Crusaders*, and to many who based high hopes upon it *The Bauble Shop* came as a disappoint-



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AT A DINNER GIVEN BY THE ARGONAUT CLUB IN HONOUR OF HIS KNIGHTHOOD

*Mrs. Henry Arthur Jones, Mrs. Tree, Miss Mary Moore, Miss Winifred Emery, Lady Wyndham,
Mr. Cyril Maude, Mr. Henry Arthur Jones, Mr. R. Birnbaum, Sir Charles Wyndham, Mr. Lewis Waller, Mr. T. P. O'Connor, Mr. Max O'Rell.*

From a photograph by Messrs. Langley Ltd., 23a Old Bond Street, W.

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ment. It is by no means to be compared with the former play, although Wyndham carried it to success on his managerial shoulders. There was well observed character and clean satire in *The Crusaders*, which is quite lacking in *The Bauble Shop*. "The strange irregular rhythm of life" does not sound in it: there is too much construction and selection and too little real observation. Wyndham did all that he could to make Lord Clivebrook's attitude under Stoach's scandal-mongering seem reasonable and probable, but most people resented his very un-English and unmanly shuffling of the situation. They naturally asked what Clivebrook had to be afraid of, and one critic boldly stated his opinion that such a situation was impossible, and that Clivebrook would more likely have told Stoach to go to the devil. The whole story seemed something of a storm in a teacup—if we remember rightly the whole thing began with a cup of tea taken at rather an unconventional hour—and why Clivebrook should suffer through several acts at the hands of Stoach can only be accounted for by the fact that if he had politely or impolitely told Stoach to mind his own business there would have been no play at all, only a little incident. Mr. William Archer characterises the play as "incurably naïf," and the characters as "sentimental situation makers." Prosper Mérimée defined art as "exaggeration *à propos*," but *The Bauble Shop* is not exaggeration, it is misrepresentation which can never be *à propos*. Of Wyndham's acting it was said that "it was not only

his prestige, but his vigour and conviction that carried the play through to popular success. He was now and then a trifle too theatrical in attitude and gesture, but on the whole his portraiture of the pitiable Clivebrook was by far the strongest piece of serious acting he has as yet given us."

Sir Richard Kato is one of Mr. Jones's best drawn characters, and in that amusing comedy, *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, Wyndham scored heavily again. In this light *soufflée* of a play Mr. Jones showed how delightfully he can write when he chooses, and with what directness and appositeness he can make his points. It is a bright, sparkling trifle, yet like the *soufflée* has a certain amount of nourishment in it. George Meredith once said, "If we believe that idle meaningless laughter is the best of recreation, significant comedy which calls forth thoughtful laughter will seem pale and shallow by comparison." But in this case the "significant comedy" of *Rebellious Susan* made the laughter accorded to such plays as *London Assurance* and *The Great Divorce Case* seem very pale indeed. Everybody congratulated the actor-manager on having secured such a good play, and one that suited him so well. Who can forget his delivery of Sir Richard Kato's homily to Elaine :

Be sure that Old Dame Nature will choose her darlings to carry on her own schemes. Go home! Go home! Nature's darling woman is a stay-at-home woman and a good mother, and cares very little for anything else. Go home! Go home! and don't worry the world any longer with this tiresome sexual

business, for, take my word for it, it was settled once for all in the Garden of Eden, and there is no more to be said about it.

Elaine [furious]. Sir Richard, you are grossly indelicate.

Sir Richard [blandly]. I am: so's nature. [Cheerfully.] Now I must go and dress for dinner.

Wyndham is at his very best in such a scene as this. He has a whimsical, half tender, wholly delightful way of scolding pretty women. He has all the time such a twinkle in his eye, such humorous curves around his lips, and there is so much *savoir faire* and experience at the back of the twinkle, so much belief in and regard for human nature in the smile. He always suggests such chivalry, such an almost old-fashioned courtesy and deference to women, that it is no wonder he is so popular with the sex, who while they loudly demand women's rights, mounting platforms and rostrums, are always susceptible to those delicate attentions which are not women's rights but their privileges. In depicting the cultured man of the world, too well bred to show any violent emotion, and with a surface veneer of cynicism, Charles Wyndham has no equal. He is suave, persuasive, tender by turns; he has all the good qualities of the English gentleman on the stage. An American actor who has much the same neatness and facility, the same perfect elocution and charming manners, is William Gillette. Their methods are curiously similar; and Gillette sometimes reminds one irresistibly of our English actor.

On the production of *The Case of Rebellious Susan* the *Athenæum* said: "If there is a moral to be ex-

tracted from Mr. Jones's play, it is that women whom one deprives of the right of retaliation, lie," and speaks of Lady Susan as lying "like a scientific expert," but then the writer evidently takes the view that she should "fess" to her husband and all the world, and get what comfort she can from a husband's probably grudging forgiveness. He adds at the end of his remarks, "It is to Mr. Jones's credit that he has furnished Mr. Wyndham with a character that is perhaps that clever actor's masterpiece." But afterwards it was agreed by many that in the same dramatist's *The Liars* he even excelled this performance.

In Messrs. Louis N. Parker and Murray Carson's *Rosemary* Wyndham found another popular success. He exactly suited the play, and the play exactly suited him, and they remained on the very best of terms for some long time, and afterwards renewed their friendship at the opening of the New Theatre in 1903. *Rosemary* is a dainty trifle that gives the playgoer very genuine pleasure and does not add to the ever increasing number of worry wrinkles left on our foreheads by the everyday too realistic story of life. It is a pretty little romance that never degenerates into the maudlin or wrings the heart of the playgoer. It does not disagree with our dinner or take away our appetite for supper.

The play was admirably staged, and gave many excellent opportunities for character acting, notably the parts of Captain Cruikshank, Professor Jogram, and the post boy. But *Rosemary* is not a play to be

lightly essayed by amateurs who are popularly supposed to rush in where actors fear to tread, by reason of the difficult last act. That Wyndham came through the test so triumphantly was no surprise to his admirers, but every amateur actor is not a Wyndham, unfortunately for his friends. To play hearty manhood until the last act and then take a flying leap over fifty years to portray the youth grown into a doddering old man is not easy. A less capable actor than he might well have ruined the play. The last act makes an artistic if unnecessary "finis" to the whole thing, this pathetic picture of the winter of old age remembering the blossoms of summer. There is the old coffee-room where he has dined year after year, at first full of the thoughts of her, then gradually remembering her fitfully, and seeing her through the golden haze of time ; until fifty years after, when he has reached the age of ninety, the whole scene is brought back to him as if it had been yesterday by the finding of the souvenir of their love which he had himself hidden away behind the wainscoting. Here was none of the horror of old age, with its vain regrets and disillusiones, but only the pathos and poetry, as in Mr. Gilbert's *Sweethearts*. Yes, but in real life, the cynic will remark, they would long ago have both been disillusioned. He would have met her, grown stout and matronly, with a double chin and a quiverful of children ; she would have discovered that he was irritable and narrow-minded, with a dread of sudden noises, a penchant for the easiest chair in the room, and an antipathy to children. But *Rosemary* makes

no pretence to realism : it is a pretty idyll that still flourishes in spite of such things as noisy motor-cars and unsteerable aeroplanes. It must not be examined through the cynic's eyeglass too closely, but we must don our *couleur de rose* spectacles, if we are old enough to need spectacles.

It is the fashion nowadays to sneer at early Victorianisms in dress and manners, but was not the impression produced by *Rosemary* that of a quaintly pretty and rather reposeful picture ? And did not Miss Mary Moore, with her soft ringlets shading her face and her sloping-shouldered, high-waisted frock of the period, compel our admiration ?

The parts of Dr. Carey in *The Physician* and Sir Christopher Deering in *The Liars* gave Wyndham every opportunity to display his powers of high comedy, and fitted his later manner to perfection.

"Love is the sauce to life," said hot-headed Falkner in *The Liars*. "Yes," returned pretty Lady Jessie Nepean, "but don't dish it up too often or too strong." There is a good deal of this sauce with a somewhat profuse garnishing of lies in this play of Mr. Jones's. In *The Case of Rebellious Susan*, in *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, and in *The Liars* we hear a great deal of what the schoolboy defined as "a very present help in time of trouble." According to Mr. Jones, they are in reality of very little assistance, for they always cause the characters in his plays to sink deeper and deeper in the mire, and it usually takes a strong hand to extricate them. As Sir Christopher Deering, Wyndham plays the part



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN "THE LIARS," 1897
From a photograph by Messrs. Ellis & Walery

of the strong hand or rather the powerfully persuasive, common-sensical tongue, and once again he comes to the rescue of frail, pretty, mendacious womankind in distress. Of course, had Mr. Jones not selected a weak woman for his heroine there would have been no opportunity for the strong man to come forth to the rescue, so perhaps it is only a question of supply and demand. Take one weak woman, one strong man, a backbiting, sharp-tongued woman friend, and various people who say amusing things but are not particularly anything, and we have a Henry Arthur Jones comedy. When we see Sir Charles accepting the rôle of saviour, we could almost believe in these extraordinary indiscretions of which Mr. Jones writes. Who can smooth down a determined angry husband as can Wyndham, who can calm an excited tearful woman, or put the busy-body off the scent as can he? Tolerant, polished, full of common sense and worldly wisdom, he seems as Sir Christopher Deering to be the friend of all. When the passionate lover raves to him that Lady Jessie is united to a man who is utterly unworthy of her, he smiles tolerantly and says :

All women are married to men who are utterly unworthy of them—bless 'em. All women are undervalued by their husbands—bless 'em. All women are misunderstood—bless 'em. His philosophy as regards the fair sex is Love 'em, worship 'em, make the most of 'em, go down on your knees every day and thank God for having sent them into this dreary world for our good and comfort. But don't break your heart over 'em, don't ruin your career for 'em, don't lose a night's rest for 'em. They aren't worth it—except one.

Certainly the women of Henry Arthur Jones are *not* worth it. The plot of *The Liars* is not very substantial or engrossing, but such is the brilliancy and point of the dialogue, the brightness of its action and the truthfulness and humour of the characterisation that the play received a great reception, and may be reckoned among Wyndham's most successful ventures.

Now we come to a very different kind of play, one that came as an enormous surprise to Wyndhamites, *The Jest*. The part of Cesare was tempting to any actor, and one cannot but understand how it was that he was blinded to the defects of the play, which could never have been a great success anywhere and was peculiarly unsuited to Wyndham's methods and to his public. In it he made an excursion into romantic drama, as again later in *Cyrano de Bergerac*, and admirable as some of his acting could not fail to be, it cannot be considered as one of his happiest efforts. As Mr. Archer said, "Amid much ability, there is no sustained distinction of style, no subtlety of analysis, no sense of inevitableness in the march of action. The authors are for ever straining after poetry of conception and expression, never quite reaching it. They lack that magical quality, whether of invention or of style, which alone can justify so lavish an employment of the Brummagen trappings of romance. Their story has two faults—it is far from clear, and if it were as clear as daylight, it would scarcely be interesting." Mr. J. T. Grein wrote that he was reminded "of

certain German playwrights of the eighties. They had one trifling idea of a plot in their minds; and with that material sat down and wrote dialogue—wrote, wrote, until the three or four acts were complete, and the thing, strengthened by a dash of dramatic construction, had at least the outward appearance of a play." Cesare was required to die in the last act, and was, like Charles II., an "unconscionable time" in doing so. He crawls to the balcony to wave the banner to Cosmos which shall recall him from the sea, after which he delivers a long, long speech of nearly ten minutes' duration. Wyndham's knowledge of his *métier* has always been immense, but on this occasion he made an error in judgment, a thing to which all men are liable, and the play was soon withdrawn.

In *The Tyranny of Tears*, his next production, Wyndham was once again "at home." It is just such a comedy as he shines in, a comedy full of humour and good nature, a comedy of manners and light emotions, in which his little refinements of speech and acting come naturally to the front. It is a delightful little play—again not to be examined with too critical an eye otherwise we should not be able to come away soothed by the "happy ending;" one that can be seen more than once without tempting the fatal yawn. As Parbury, the clever but easy-going husband of a vapid, shallow, over-tearful wife, Wyndham was perfect. Nothing more natural has ever been written or acted than the commencement of the third act, where the

deserted husband and his friend Gunning, both in irritable and touchy frames of mind and body, meet at the breakfast table in the garden. Nothing could have been better than the acting of Wyndham and Mr. Frederick Kerr in this scene: one almost felt like an intruder at real breakfast table amenities and had the inclination either to slip away and wait till the day was better aired or bury one's self in the programme. Parbury having received a rose from the hands of his typist, who has previously denied Gunning one, says:

Oh! I see—wanted a rose yourself. Shall I call Miss Woodward back and ask for one?

Gunning. Don't trouble; I've done that myself.

Parbury. You have? Ha! Ha! [*Beginning to laugh but stops suddenly.*] Oh! [*Holding his head.*] Dear! Dear! what a head I have!

Everyone who has seen Wyndham act will conjure up the quick change of voice and expression that accompanies the last speech. This quick change of emotions is one of his peculiar gifts, he can turn a groan into a laugh, and a sigh into a smile before the playgoer has time to blink an eyelid. It reminds one of that scene in *The Candidate* when in the middle of a roar of laughter at the idea of a man having been bribed to vote with the gift of a diamond ring, he suddenly stops short transfixed with horror at the remembrance that it is *his* ring which he had lent to his secretary.

Mrs. Parbury, it will be remembered, chooses to be jealous and exacting, and runs away like a spoilt

child to the home of her father, a gay old widower who is seriously embarrassed thereat. He seeks the deserted husband to talk the matter over, and finds the two men at breakfast. In reply to Parbury's inquiry as to his wife's health he reassures him, and adds:

We supped in the kitchen at two. It's amazing how emotion stimulates the appetite. No, Clement, her indisposition is of the mind. She wept.

Parbury. All the time?

Armitage. All the time. [*Then he adds with a sigh.*] I had a rather trying night of it . . . my dear daughter is, of course, always more than welcome to my home, but I trust you will not misunderstand me when I say that I require notice. Since I regained my liberty—I mean since the death of your wife's dear mother, I've drifted into my own—er—little ways. This affair has deranged my plans; without being indiscreet, I may tell you that I've had to send telegrams.

The scene of the reconciliation in the last act, when Parbury tries to bring his sentimental, tearful, pussy-cat of a wife to reason, gave the actor some capital speeches which he delivered with earnestness and feeling.

Does love without respect count for very much? Would you like to go back to the old way, the way of petty tyranny, the way of the cowardly unnecessary tear—the way of being a spoilt child instead of a thoughtful and considerate woman?

and speaks of love,

pecked to a cupboard skeleton by littlenesses, little jealousies, little selfishnesses, little insults, little tyrannies, little intolerances.

Miss Woodward, one of a family of thirteen reared

in a country vicarage, where the dresses are handed down from one to another, and the Sunday joint goes through various metamorphoses during the week, is a very clever bit of characterisation, as is George Gunning, who until he meets her has always looked upon marriage as a "state of warfare."

And now with *The Tyranny of Tears* we come to an end of Wyndham's Criterion days : he was about to seek fresh woods and pastures new. The handsome playhouse in Charing Cross Road was awaiting its tenant, but before we close this chapter we ought to notice an extraordinary performance that Wyndham gave on behalf of the Actors' Benevolent Fund. It was on May 1, 1896, and was to commemorate twenty years' sole managership of the Criterion Theatre. It commenced at the Lyceum Theatre with a matinée of *A Clerical Error*, an act from *Money*, and the last three acts of *The School for Scandal*, Wyndham himself appearing in the last named. In the evening the Criterion programme was as follows : *Who's to Win Him*, a scene from *The Hunchback*, and *David Garrick*. Associated with Wyndham were the most famous actors and actresses in the profession, all delighting to help him adequately to celebrate so happy an event. The day was a great triumph for the famous actor-manager, both personally and artistically. The public showed how they appreciated his efforts and his work, and supported him to such an extent that the handsome sum of £2,452 6s. 4d. was handed over to the Actors' Benevolent Fund. One of Sir Charles's most cherished possessions is an

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SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN A REVIVAL OF "THE LIARS," 1907
From a photograph by Messrs. Ellis & Walery



address presented to him by the profession on this occasion, crowded with the signatures of famous artists. To crown the day he and Lady Wyndham gave a banquet at the Hotel Cecil, at which he was conspicuous by his energy and brightness. As a well-known critic wrote : "Think of it ! Charles Surface and an earnest speech full of feeling in the morning, David Garrick and another speech at night : and after that a banquet at the Hotel Cecil suggestive of more congratulations and many more speeches. It was a ceremony that would have tried the nerves and energy of the strongest man living, but Charles Wyndham was equal to the occasion. He was never better in his life than as Charles Surface : he never spoke with such grace and charm as when he faced Mr. Comyns Carr, and after all the exhaustion and excitement it may be doubted if he ever played David Garrick so successfully."

And now we must take leave of the Criterion and follow Wyndham to the new theatre named after himself. No doubt it was somewhat of a wrench to leave the little Piccadilly playhouse where he had built up such a reputation and produced so many plays. Twenty-three years is, indeed, a long time for an actor to be associated with one theatre, and Wyndham had many pleasant memories to take with him to his new house. He had come to the Criterion full of hope, full of enthusiasm, full of energy, and he had more than realised his great expectations.

One hears nowadays great discussions about the expenses of management and the large amount of

capital that is necessary for any adventure. Sir Charles Wyndham, on his own confession, started his managerial career with thirty pounds, and he never had a backer. He made his theatre one of the most popular in London, and stamped himself as one of the leading actors of the day. He left behind him a record of brilliant successes which he could hardly hope to better. He had aimed high, he had worked hard, and Fortune had smiled upon him. What more could she give him at Wyndham's Theatre ?

CHAPTER III

WYNDHAM'S THEATRE

WITH characteristic generosity, Wyndham handed over to charity the proceeds of the opening night of his new theatre, this time to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association. No less a sum than £4000 was realised on this occasion. It was an extraordinary audience, brimming over with enthusiasm and good will. It nearly overwhelmed him with applause, and seemed as though it could never have enough of him. In his new home Wyndham chose to appear as an old friend, David Garrick. The public found at Wyndham's Theatre a handsome and commodious house, and although some old playgoers regretted that the Criterion days were over, they could not but approve of the new playhouse.

Soon after his tenancy began an interesting announcement was made—Wyndham was to appear in an English version of *Cyrano de Bergerac*, which Messrs. Stuart Ogilvie and Louis N. Parker were to prepare for him. Rostand's play was just then being hailed by France as "the harbinger of a new era in dramatic poetry, the finest play of the half century," so the announcement was received with great interest. It occasioned some surprise that

Wyndham should so deviate from the lines he had laid down for himself as to play Cyrano, but this lent added interest. Wyndham as Cyrano de Bergerac! An excursion into the enchanted land of romance! Curiosity and interest ran high to see how he would play that wonderful figure described as "a whirlwind fencer, a poet, swashbuckler musician, and weird withal; whimsical, wild, grotesque, but a devil with his sword. Mark with what fierce disdain he wears his cloak, and cocks it up behind him with that sword like the defiant curve of a bantam's tail."

A well-known actor-manager who, like Wyndham, has endeared himself to the public largely by the charm of his own personality and appearance, regretfully remarked some little time ago that he would love to play old men and character parts, but his public would have none of him in them. If I paint wrinkles, round my shoulder, and generally disguise myself, my special public is disappointed, I must be myself or the play is doomed. No matter how artistic the acting, how fine the play, they don't want me in an old part. I am condemned to be—or appear, rather—eternally young."

Many of Wyndham's admirers shuddered at the idea of his appearing with that grotesque absurd nose of Cyrano. They decided beforehand that they infinitely preferred him in parts like Sir Christopher Deering and Sir Richard Kato. Even in *David Garrick* and *The School for Scandal* he was still himself plus picturesque attire and a powdered



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM IN 1899
From a photograph by Messrs. Langflet, Ltd.

wig. But as Cyrano ! Thus does an actor pay the penalty of an attractive personality. It is the same as with an author who makes his mark as a humourist and then unexpectedly brings forth a serious novel. The public is confused and uncomfortable. The British playgoer has habits of mind as well as of body, and does not like them rudely disturbed. He has taken the trouble to pigeonhole an actor in his mind, as light comedy, heavy drama, roaring farce, &c., and having been at some pains to find the label, he hates having his classification made to look false and ridiculous.

It was a foregone conclusion among those who knew the play that however well it had been "Englished," it could not hope to be anything more than a *succès d'estime*, which indeed proved to be the case. The whole idea of the play is so thoroughly French in treatment and in subject, that the figure of Cyrano could never appeal to the British subject as he did to the Frenchman, and above all, the subtle charm of the language, the scintillating wit, the delicate fervour of the poetry do not well bear transplanting. The preposterous pose and gasconade leaves the ordinary Englishman cold ; he has not the temperament or the imagination to follow Cyrano's flights of fancy. Romance he sees and likes, but he prefers it in more conventional clothes, more *comme il faut* ; such displays of feeling, such braggadocia seem to him almost indecent, just as he either laughs or sneers at the Frenchman's kiss of welcome on either cheek. His expression of emotion is a silent grip

of the hand, he cannot and does not want to understand anything else. He might conceivably call Cyrano a "bounder"! He does not realise that Cyrano de Bergerac is a fantasy, a romantic fairy tale, what Lamb would call "all enchantment and a dream."

When the idea of Wyndham appearing in this play was first mooted, a suggestion with regard to its adaptation was made to him to which he replied as follows: "I have to thank you very much for your kind suggestion, all the more appreciated inasmuch as for some considerable time I was struck with the same advisability. The idea was to place the piece in Elizabethan days and to turn the Gascon into an Irishman. That it would gain in intelligibility to an average audience I am quite sure, but on the other hand I fear it would lose among the people of cult to in any measure interfere with such a classic as the play in question." Unfortunately, "the people of cult" are not among us in such large numbers as to ensure the run of any classic: the cultured one is apt to read it in his own study and ignore the playhouse as an interpreter.

The play was admirably staged and the translation was, as every one admitted, a most creditable achievement considering the difficulties of the task. But the play, as was foreseen, did not run long; it received what Wyndham called "a most peculiar reception." On the whole it was praised by the Press, and Wyndham in the part of Cyrano received a generous meed of appreciation. Some who came

to scoff remained to bless. Wyndham was not a Coquelin, as might have been expected, but he made a very attractive impersonation of the swashbuckler and showed that he could be something more than volatile Bob Sackett or Rover, something more than a courtly, debonair David Garrick, or a suave man of the world like Mr. Kilroy in the *Squire of Dames*. One critic said, "if Coquelin was not the ideal of the poet, he was so near the mark, so wonderfully humorous in the lighter parts of the play, that rivalry seemed well-nigh impossible. What was wanting to fulfil that ideal was not the power of Wyndham, but the force and the grace of the language, to which alone the play owes its world-famed reputation." Every one who saw it will remember Wyndham's great moment in the death scene, which was most poetically conceived and played. It was acted with great restraint and very genuine feeling, but the public, "ever preferring marriage to death," begged Wyndham not to harrow their feelings, but to return to that light comedy which he had made so peculiarly his own.

Wyndham is not easily disturbed or fretted by any untoward stage accidents or small mishaps ; in this he is like the late Sir Henry Irving, whom we remember to have seen take a candle, which in a most important scene suddenly went out, to the wings, get it lighted, bring it back, and continue the scene as though nothing had occurred ; but during the run of *Cyrano de Bergerac* he was put to a very severe test. The war in South Africa was exciting everybody's thoughts

at the time, especially the siege of Mafeking. During the balcony scene a sudden hubbub was heard in the street, then such a shouting and yelling that Wyndham had perforce to stop in his speech. The play came to a standstill. Then like a wave it spread through the house that Mafeking was relieved. The news literally electrified the house, who thrilled to the situation. There were many historic and unheard-of scenes in the theatres that evening, but *Cyrano de Bergerac* is not a play into which the relief of Mafeking can be successfully interpolated, and our sympathy would certainly have gone out to Wyndham on that occasion.

Wyndham's next venture was *Mrs. Dane's Defence*, which was more on the lines of some previous plays. Once again Mr. Henry Arthur Jones furnished him with a splendid part : indeed, it would seem that the dramatist had the actor in his mind when he wrote it, so well does it fit him. The whole play exists for the third act, a really remarkable piece of stage-craft. It was Wyndham's and Miss Lena Ashwell's great scene : so well did they act that the audience was made genuinely uncomfortable by the spectacle of the relentless judge probing out the truth from the trapped, unhappy woman. Wyndham once more played the seasoned man of the world, but it is by no means so likeable a character as most of the other men of this stamp he has given us. Although he confesses that he was on the point of eloping with a man's wife, and had persuaded her to leave her children and home to follow his fortunes, an accident only prevent-



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AS CYRANO DE BERGERAC
From a photograph by the London Stereoscopic Coy.

ing its accomplishment, he shows no grain of pity for the woman who erred in her girlhood, and frustrates remorselessly her efforts to re-enter society as the wife of a young man whom she loves and who returns her affection. The sympathy of the audience is entirely with the woman who tries to bury the past of Felicia Hindemarsch, and live as her dead cousin, Lucy Dane. But in the cross-examination the judge is altogether too strong for her, and bit by bit he forces out the truth from her until he says suddenly, "You are Felicia Hindemarsch!" It was a magnificent piece of acting on the part of both performers. One critic said of Wyndham, "He has done nothing better and little that is equally good," and another, "His impersonation of the judge was but one more finely-developed character sketch in the exquisite gallery of his art," and, speaking of the third act: "The effect of this scene is—without exaggeration—colossal: at least such was the impression it made on me. I felt the moral torture so intensely, the cunningly devised phrases of the author, the insinuating force of Wyndham's dulcet manner, of his screwing, digging, exploding voice, the terrible, mortified face of Miss Ashwell—all that concentration of influence to destroy the new life of a woman—it made me almost implore aloud for mercy. It was painful, physically as well as mentally. Yet I do not complain, for authors and actors between them had but reproduced an episode of real life, and in placing it before us they had, if anything, softened its awful veracity."

The year 1902 was important. The Coronation honours included the name of Charles Wyndham, who was raised to the rank of knighthood. He was overwhelmed with congratulations from all over the world; no knighthood could have been more popular with the profession. It was a great gratification to him, for though the labourer receives his just hire, still he occasionally hankers after that recognition which to the artist particularly is more than actual monetary success. He was pleased for himself and he was pleased on behalf of the profession which he represented. He has always appraised that profession highly, always done everything that lay in his power to promote its welfare, always upheld its honour and ideals. No one grudged him his knighthood, no one had any doubt but that it was deserved, and all gave him their most hearty congratulations.

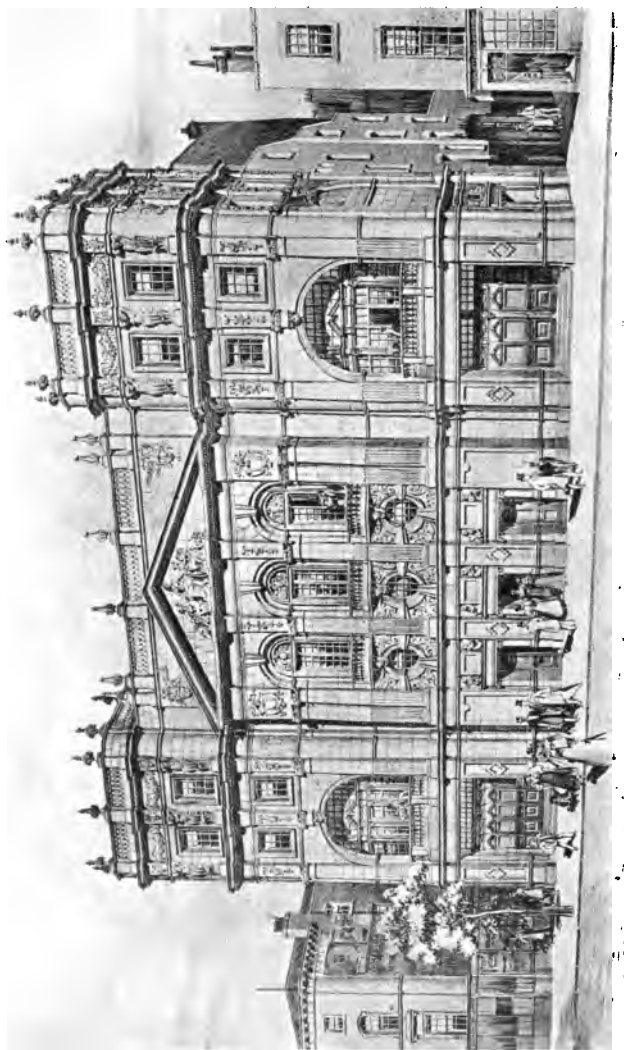
Wyndham has always been eager to help young dramatists to the front, and to support plays of home manufacture. At one time he borrowed freely from across the Channel, but those were the days of the farce, and good English farces are rare. Since those days he has almost always favoured English writers. A list of English dramatists whose plays he has produced includes such well-known names as Louis N. Parker, Murray Carson, Henry Arthur Jones, R. C. Carton, Sir Francis Burnand, Haddon Chambers, and Hubert Henry Davies. The last-mentioned writer made his professional début under the wing of Wyndham on May 12, 1903, with

the production of *Mrs. Gorringer's Necklace*, and though it was by no means such a distinguished play as the same writer's *Cousin Kate*, produced shortly afterwards at the Haymarket, it was a very workmanlike and promising child. The treatment he accorded to *Mrs. Gorringer's Necklace* was more conventional than in the other play mentioned, in which he gave us at least one absolutely fresh and unconventional act. In *Mrs. Gorringer's Necklace* one occasionally heard the creaking of the machinery and saw the hand that jerked the wires. The plot itself is somewhat banal and old fashioned. Mr. Walkley sums this up amusingly: "We not only get a plot, but *the* plot, the regulation size, approved pattern stolen necklace plot, with false suspicion, self-sacrificed hero, and suicide of villain all complete. Nobody ever has believed in it since it was first exhibited, as we have no doubt it was, by Thespis in his cart. But it is necessary, it has become a venerable of theatrical ritual, something which has to be gone through, not on any rational ground, but as evidence of the continuity of the race, and as a solemn tribute to our forefathers who begat us." The introduction of Scotland Yard officials in the last act, which drives the unhappy thief to suicide, brings about a startling and unnatural conclusion. But Mr. Davies showed such a marked gift for character drawing and bright eloquent dialogue that every one present on the first night regretted that he had hampered himself with such a plot. That it was an enjoyable evening in spite of this drawback said much for Mr. Davies's

handling of the characters and for the acting. Mrs. Gorringe herself is a comedy character of great charm and freshness, and as portrayed by Miss Mary Moore was altogether delightful. Who would have missed her explanation to the assembled company of her discovery of the loss of the necklace, and Mrs. Jardine's exasperation and annoyance? The part assigned to Wyndham was overweighted with virtue, which in large undiluted quantities is apt to be unconvincing, especially on the stage. He was required to be too noble and self sacrificing, to preach more than was absolutely necessary. But this was the fault of the dramatist. Wyndham almost made the character seem possible and attractive. But there is a great deal of humour, some very happy epigrams, and witty lines in the play, and Mr. Davies's maiden effort deserved the success it obtained, a success very largely due to Wyndham and his excellent company.

The same year that witnessed the production of *Mrs. Gorringe's Necklace* saw Wyndham open still another theatre, the New, in St. Martin's Lane. Another migration! A fresh theatre to conquer, a fresh stage to foot, fresh links to be forged! He still remains the lessee and manager of the Criterion Theatre, and he has built two new ones, finer and in every way more commodious. No mean achievement, surely!

After settling down for twenty-three years it seems as though the wandering instinct has touched the famous actor with its persuasive magic. But



WYNDHAM'S THEATRE.
Reproduced by the kind permission of Mr. W. G. R. Sprague, the architect.

though he go from place to place through our streets like the Pied Piper of Hamelin, follow we must perforce. If he pipes a new tune we must be there to hear it; if he gives us old familiar airs, we can enjoy them as heartily as ever we did.

And Wyndham did choose to pipe an old familiar tune at the opening of the New Theatre. He gave us *Rosemary*—Rosemary “that’s for remembrance.” As Sir Jasper Thorndyke he bade us welcome to his new theatre, one of the prettiest in London, with its cherry coloured hangings and tasteful decorations. The little idyll went as brightly and smoothly as ever, and all concerned were accorded a great reception. There were many present among the first night audience who remembered Wyndham in the old days, in *Black Eyed Susan*, dancing and fooling among the merriest, in *Trying It On* (Mr. Walsingham Potts), in *Brighton*, and various rollicking farces which, if they are not as dead as the proverbial door nail, only survive among the amateurs. These could not only enjoy Wyndham’s present performance, but could trace his progress and look back on his wonderful record, a pleasure denied to the younger playgoers, who might well refuse to believe that Wyndham was acting as long ago as 1862, and had served in the American Civil War, to them only an event connected with history classes at school.

And, indeed, it was an effort for any one to remember this, for before them on the stage was Charles Wyndham, now a knight, as youthful looking as ever, acting as well as ever, as full of spirit

and energy as when he played Bob Sackett for the first time. Off the stage—yes, his hair is rather grey and not as thick as in the days when he wore the sombrero hat of the American Army surgeon, but the eyes, the real index of the inner man, are as keen and bright as when he first played on the boards, and the quick smile and the hearty handshake are just the same.

The only production at the New Theatre that we need notice is *Captain Drew on Leave*, by Hubert Henry Davies, in which as Captain Drew, R.N., Wyndham was as debonair and delightful as ever. But this is so recent a production that it only needs bare mention, for all good playgoers who go to see Wyndham in whatever he does have seen it and have it still fresh in their memories, and bad playgoers have had their natural and deserved punishment in having missed it!

As regards the play of to-day, Wyndham takes a very cheerful view. He thinks there is infinitely more brain in it than in the plays with which he started. He refuses to believe in the dearth of dramatists and ideas. He does not shake his head regretfully and sigh in the irritating way some people do who in speaking of literature, drama, newspapers, or even only of Christmas puddings, declare that nothing is as good as it was. He firmly believes in the future of the drama and the lines on which it is advancing. As early as 1900 he prophesied as follows: "I do not mean to say that the day has yet arrived when social problems form-

ing the basis of representation are received with favour in England or America, but it will. In France they have long formed a lucrative staple of entertainment. Dumas for years has been a teacher in this school; Ibsen in Norway, Paul Lindau in Germany, and Cordorado in Spain are brother apostles of the same creed. Comedy drama in these exciting days of thought and discussion will no more be able to resist absorbing such questions than plants can help absorbing the quality of the rich diet in which their roots are planted."

CHAPTER IV

"DAVID GARRICK"

It was in 1886, more than twenty years ago, that Charles Wyndham first appeared in the evergreen play *David Garrick*. The character of Davy is so generally regarded as a Charles Wyndham part, that one is almost apt to forget that it was not written for him. It seems as though the dramatist must have had the popular actor-manager in mind when he prepared the play, so nicely does the part fit him. If a dramatist had set out to write a comedy which should display Wyndham at his best, that should give full scope for his peculiar gifts and great charm, he could not have succeeded better than in *David Garrick*.

The title *rôle* was, of course, created by Sothorn, and at the time of its production aroused a good deal of controversy as to whether it was not taking a liberty with the immortal name of the real player. To the play bill there was appended a note saying "this play is founded on an incident said to have occurred to Garrick, but which has no pretension to biographical accuracy," and a critic commenting on this note, writes "euphemism for ; the play is called *David Garrick*, but has nothing on earth to do with Garrick." Nowadays we are so accustomed to so-

called historical plays founded on impossible incidents and filled with impossible characters—what a supernaturally varied life Napoleon must have led, if only a few of the plays dealing with him have even a shred of "biographical accuracy"—that the critic of to-day only shrugs his shoulders and murmurs "la doigtée du dramaturge," and when La Bruyère said "the making of books is as much a trade as the making of clocks" he might well have included plays, especially historical.

David Garrick was adapted from De Melesville's *Sullivan*, and it is conjectured that *Sullivan* in turn was based upon a story by J. Bouchardy called *Garrick Médecin*. But no doubt there are germs of plays just as there are germs of disease in the air, and who shall say from whence they come?

It is unnecessary to tell the story of *David Garrick*, for it is as well known as that of *Our Boys* or *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. Any actor might well be daunted at the idea of impersonating the great actor of famous memory, especially as the play is, one might say, acting within acting. Garrick the man must be also Garrick the actor in the scene in which he feigns drunkenness in order to disillusion Ada Ingot. Of Sothern's rendering of the part a well-known critic wrote: "He is not a Garrick; he is a very long way indeed from being a Garrick, excellent as he is in his own way of art." But all the same the public liked Sothern in the part, and the play was a great success. It is said that Sothern, who was a very "nervy" actor, refused to believe in

his own success, and attributed much of the play's warm reception to the charming acting of Miss Nelly Moore. When many years later Miss Mary Moore made a success in the same part every one exclaimed at the curious coincidence by which two actresses of the same name should be identified with the play. But "that's another story," or one might say that is another play, for the piece was largely re-written and revised when Charles Wyndham produced it at the Criterion. The only blot upon Sothorn's performance, according to the critics, seems to have been that he could not make love to please them. They accused him of hardness of voice and lack of tenderness in the scenes with Ada. This annoyed Sothorn greatly—perhaps he knew there was a measure of truth in it. He brooded over it, and at one of his benefit performances went before the curtain and made a speech, in which he said : "The local critics have suggested that my voice is hardly suited to the gentle art of love-making. With some compunction and with my hand appropriately placed on my heart, I should like to inform those gentlemen that, following in private life that most agreeable of pursuits, I unfortunately find that *I get on as well as most people and sometimes faster than is absolutely desirable.*"

David Garrick is an instance of a play that was hawked round London and shown to any number of managers, who each and all declared that it was bound to fail. For seven years the play was shelved, until Robertson happened one day to recount the plot to Sothorn, who was on the look out for a play.



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AND MISS MARY MOORE IN "DAVID GARRICK"
From a photograph by Messrs. Barraud & Robertson

He succeeded in arousing Sothorn's interest, with the result that we know. Robertson's answer to his critics regarding the truthfulness of the incidents on which the play is based was rather amusing. He claims that though they are not borne out by biography or history, "they are not for that reason untrue. They might have happened. The real, actual Mr. David Garrick was not married until the year 1749. Whatever adventures may have occurred to him before that time are a legitimate theme for speculation."

When Wyndham revived *David Garrick* on November 16, 1886, he, as was his wont, surrounded himself with a very fine cast. George Giddens played Squire Chivy ; William Blakeley, Smith ; David James, Simon Ingot ; and Mary Moore, Ada Ingot. It was a tremendous and immediate success for one and all, but especially for Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore. We have seen this clever comedian in many parts, but perhaps of all others his David Garrick stands out the foremost as an unforgettable picture. The blend of humour and pathos, the lightness of touch with which the ball is kept rolling, the dignity and restraint of the drunken scene, the charm of his personality, his urbanity, his grace, have endeared him to many thousands of play-goers, not only here but on the Continent and in America. Whenever a special matinée or a few nights' revival is announced, the public eagerly flock to the theatre. We all feel to *David Garrick* as we do to an old friend. We are not at any pains to analyse it or conjecture :

we have long ago accepted it with its virtues and its limitations. Wyndham estimates that he has played the part about a thousand times. He said recently : "I suppose I must confess that it is my, or rather the public's favourite part of mine, for personally I am averse to such distinctions, and every rôle I play pleases me equally well as long as it pleases the public. In earlier days I had no more idea of appearing in *David Garrick* than I have now of playing Hamlet. I had resolved that I would never perform in any of the parts made famous by Sothorn or Charles Mathews, for though always a great admirer of their consummate art, I do not believe in practising the proverb that 'imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.' "

David Garrick is what is called an actor's play. It is theatrically effective, and full of good dialogue and scenes. In one or two places, particularly in the drunken scene, it rises to something higher. There is very true feeling and pathos in Garrick's shelving of self and his attempt to disillusion the young girl who loves and admires him. To see Wyndham is to see the agony and shame of the *man* every now and then creep out of the actor's eyes, while he seems every minute on the point of crying out that he is not as black as he paints himself. Wyndham was perhaps at his best in this scene : every look every gesture was exactly right, and the whole thing was so carefully and lovingly thought out that it stamped the actor, if nothing else had done so, as a true artist.

With the passage of years, Wyndham's reading of the part has perhaps insensibly changed a little. His later manner sits upon him ; he is not so much the eager, vigorous lover as he was. He has acquired, not only in *David Garrick* but in other plays, a gentle, wholly delightful touch of the fatherly "give-you-good-advice" manner. He has an inimitable way of befriending pretty young women, of smiling indulgently at their escapades, and scolding them in a half whimsical, half man-of-the-world manner. He manages to convey a tender regret full of sweet memories that his days of passionate love-making are over. He is, indeed, an ideal platonic friend who makes one question once again if platonic friendships are possible. He renounces so charmingly with his "Bless you, my children !" that we would scarcely have him win ; he is so delightful when he is a little sad that we would not have him wholly gay. Some of the breeziness and light-heartedness of Bob Sackett has vanished, which is but natural, but what strides he has made in his art since the days of *The Pink Dominoes* and *The Great Divorce Case* ! In those days we very much doubt if he could have played the last act of *Rosemary*, where the old man of ninety finds the souvenir of his early love, withered and time-stained like himself, hidden behind the wainscoting of the old coffee room.

Charles Wyndham was fortunate enough to be born with the gift for facial expression, no inconsiderable part of an actor's outfit. The speaking eye, the mobile lips, and play of eyebrow and eyelid,

they are almost indispensable to the actor. By this we do not mean the excessive pantomime and grimaces that several popular actors and actresses indulge in. Screwing up the eyes and tightening the lips does not always express agony of mind ; it often only confuses the onlooker, or fills him with a desire to laugh. The boy Charles's ambition was, like that of the Fat Boy in "Pickwick," to make people's flesh creep, but his voice is not that of a tragedian, and it is perhaps just as well that he went no farther than acting Othello before his own looking-glass with as dirty a face as he could manage. The timbre of his voice is essentially that of a comedian, admirably adapted to express the lighter emotions, but one cannot imagine it declaiming : "To be, or not to be—" Every one has his or her limitations, or the world would be a dry level desert of excellence, and it is no detraction to Sir Charles Wyndham's great gifts to say this.

David Garrick has been a great favourite with Royalty. In 1887, the Prince of Wales, as King Edward then was, commanded a performance of the play at Sandringham, which was a much more uncommon occurrence then than now. On succeeding to the throne, His Majesty gave a great fillip to the drama by so openly avowing his enjoyment of and admiration for the playhouse. In 1903 he again commanded the play, and this time it was played in that commodious little theatre in the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor Castle, the King and Queen of Italy and many distinguished guests being



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AS DAVID GARRICK

*From a Wash Drawing by F. C. Barnard, reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of
"The Illustrated London News"*

present. It was a great occasion, and Sir Charles Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore received very handsome and valuable souvenirs in the shape of a gold box with his Majesty's portrait and "E. R." in diamonds on the lid, and a beautifully designed brooch wrought in pearls, enamel, and diamonds. Waterloo Chamber has since seen many representations of well-known plays and many popular players have trod its boards, but this performance of *David Garrick* was said to have been the first important production that took place there since the death of the Prince Consort.

A laughable incident once occurred during a production of this play. The part of Simon Ingot was being played by a well-known actor who was then well on in years and liable occasionally to get his lines mixed. On this occasion when he confronts David Garrick with the remark, "Oh ! Mr. Garrick, if you were only sober," he said, "Oh ! Mr. Wyndham, if you were only sober !" The audience sent up a huge shout of laughter which nearly ruined the scene.

Wyndham, besides his other accomplishments, is a good linguist, and himself translated the play into German. After its successful production at the Criterion, Germany decided that here was a play worth seeing, and a German manager immediately opened negotiations with Wyndham to appear in it at his theatre in Berlin. In those days for a modern English play to be translated into German and played by an English company abroad was almost

unprecedented, and Wyndham himself acknowledges that it was a very nervous work. The first performances were given at Liegnitz, and subsequently the little company played in Berlin. Critical though the audience were, the English players completely captured their hearts and won their warm admiration. It was a great achievement, and certainly should be counted a feather in Wyndham's cap. How many present-day actors can one think of who could first translate a play into German and then perform it so as to excite the admiration of our Teutonic friends? So great was Wyndham's success, that the fame of *David Garrick* reached to the ears of the Czar himself, who thereupon desired that Wyndham and Miss Mary Moore should journey to St. Petersburg and give him a taste of their quality. This they did, Wyndham being accompanied on this trip by his wife and daughter. Wyndham relates,* "During rehearsals at St. Petersburg, also with a German company, and at the Government Theatre, we had, among other interesting experiences, the opportunity of witnessing the blessing of the Neva, while throughout our visit we were treated with the utmost courtesy, a Government carriage being placed at our disposal. Miss Moore also had the interesting experience, during a temporary indisposition of mine, of conducting the rehearsals in German. The last performance took place by special request at the Popular Theatre—a very large theatre—the audience in-

* Vide *Daily Mail*, November 23, 1906.

cluding the Grand Duke Sergius, who was recently assassinated. From St. Petersburg we went to Moscow for another three weeks, though I should mention here that we only played every other night, in accordance with the admirable rule prevailing in Russia, where actors are treated more considerately in that way than by the English public. Only an opera singer has a voice in England! That is, perhaps, why I am so fond of going abroad. Just when we were on the point of returning to England, through Warsaw, we were asked to return to St. Petersburg for one special performance, which was attended by the entire Russian Imperial family, from youngest to oldest, and including the present Czar, who was then little more than a boy."

It would not be fair to close this chapter without paying a tribute to Miss Mary Moore's impersonation of Ada Ingot, a most admirable support to Wyndham's Garrick.

Miss Moore first attracted and held the favour of the public in the revival of *Wild Oats*, in which she played the dainty Lady Amaranth. Before this she had played but seldom, and only small parts. But when her chance came she showed that she was a true actress, and the public has then and ever since delighted to witness her impersonations. Since *Wild Oats* she has, as all the world knows, been constantly appearing with Wyndham in various plays, but in none has she made a greater success than in Ada Ingot. As the stage-struck, romantic girl who in the beginning of *David Garrick* sadly sighs,

Bid me go into a new made grave
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud,

because the course of true love does not run smooth, she is thoroughly sweet and girlish, besides at all times making a charming picture. Her triumphs have been largely bound up with those of the famous actor-manager, and how much they have each contributed to one another's success it would be difficult to say, but Sir Charles has always been the first to acknowledge the debt he owes to her support and *camaraderie*.

In conclusion, a few lines from *David Garrick* seem to describe Wyndham exactly.

Chivy. What are his talents? I think of Davy's talents that his talents are such that the most talented must confess that his talents are talents that—that—you understand.

Ada. Ah! but about his genius?

Chivy. Yes, I was going to say about his genius. Davy's genius is so wedded to his talents, that when his talents break down, his genius pulls him through, and he wins by a neck.

Ada. But his character, his mind?

Chivy. Oh! Davy's character and mind? Oh! sound in mind and limb. He's sought for by the most eminent and—(chuckling) he's a great favourite with the ladies.

CHAPTER V

MAINLY PERSONAL

IN writing about Sir Charles Wyndham one is confronted with the difficulty of translating into words that intangible something called "temperament." Directly one tries to define temperament, the pen falls helpless to the desk and the eye of the brain seems to be seeking to pierce a wall of fog that blurs the word picture for which it is searching. Every one who knows Sir Charles will understand what is meant when we say that he is a man with a temperament. It is like a bowl of *pot pourri*; it permeates and pervades every word that he utters, every look that he gives, every gesture that he makes. He could never be unnoticed. Is it his appearance, with his spare erect figure and refined, intellectual face? Is it his voice, with its cultured modulations and perfect elocution? It is all these and much more that is indescribable and yet to be felt. No actor-manager in London is more respected and liked in the profession and in private life; all those who know him speak of him with affection.

No knighthood could have been more popular with the rank and file of the theatrical world, and every one felt that Wyndham would carry the honour as becomes a knight, which cannot be said

of everybody who receives that distinction nowadays. Off the stage he is very much what he is on. He has so strong a personality that it infuses itself into every part he plays. For the actor to sink utterly his personality in that of the part he is playing no doubt is the greatest triumph of artistic skill. Charles Wyndham has never been able to do that. It is a limitation, and he has recognised it frankly. After a short apprenticeship to the stage, in which he tried his hand at various lines, the sentimental hero among them (which he played uncommonly badly), he found his *métier*, and he has been faithful to it ever since.

Sir Charles's energy is boundless : obstacles never daunt him ; he seems rather to exult in overcoming them. He is not easily dismayed, and he has a little way of disposing of stage difficulties as though they were mere child's play. During a revival of *Brighton* in 1891 there was a strike among the stagehands, scene shifters, lime light men, &c., which was suddenly sprung upon Wyndham immediately before the advertised time of opening the theatre. Without losing an instant he summoned his personal staff and various members of the company on to the stage, and himself working as vigorously as any one of them, directed the putting up of the scenery. Mr. Henderson recalls with amusement that they set the scenery and changed it between the acts much quicker than the ordinary stage hands were in the habit of doing, in spite of the fact that every obstacle had been put in the way, even to the removal of the stage screws.



SIR CHARLES WYNDHAM AND MISS MARION TERRY IN "CAPTAIN DREW ON LEAVE"
From a photograph by the Dover Street Studios, Ltd.

Perhaps Sir Charles learnt some of this readiness in his tours in the United States, particularly in the West, where the conditions under which plays were given in Wyndham's early days were rough and promiscuous, and where it behoved the actor-manager to be quick-witted and ready for any emergency that might occur on and off the stage. We all know accidents will happen in the best regulated theatres, but the theatres in the West were little if at all regulated, and the accident the rule rather than the exception.

Wyndham finds his dramatic work so engrossing that he has no time for hobbies of any description, or rather it might be said that his work and his hobby are one and the same. When he is not acting he is planning fresh campaigns and browsing among plays, perhaps original ones with an eye to production, perhaps old-time favourites for the pure joy of reading. He has a wide knowledge of dramatic literature, and his tastes are catholic.

Wyndham has paid many visits to America, and, indeed, was one of the first well-known light actors to visit that side. His first experience on the American boards was not altogether propitious, and at that time there seemed no prospect of his capturing the American heart, but when Wyndham "found himself" in London, and crossed the ocean again, he played to a very different audience. Ever since then he has been a prime favourite with our transatlantic cousins, who look upon him as one of the most polished and gifted comedians of our time.

Wyndham has always enjoyed his visits to the States and the welcome he receives there. He is personally most popular, his vivid sense of humour and irresistible gaiety being much appreciated. Of his plays, *David Garrick* is a prime favourite, in spite of the fact that Sothorn had previously held them in the title rôle, as well as Laurence Barrett. Other plays in which he appeared there included *The School for Scandal*, *Caste*, *Fourteen Days*, and *Brighton*, which, it will be remembered, originally hailed from that side.

From the stage to the dinner table ! Those whose lot it is to attend many public dinners with their sequel of speeches know only too well how rare a bird is the good after-dinner speaker, and how remarked upon is such a bird when snared. When natural facility and easy wit are linked to the elocution and easy delivery of the actor, the result is happy indeed, and Sir Charles is famous for his admirable little speeches at such functions. The most fluent conversationist is liable to become tongue-tied when he throws down his napkin and rises above the sea of white tablecloth and glittering glasses, but Sir Charles is never at a loss for a word or a happy allusion. Surely he must have Irish blood in his veins !

Besides after-dinner speechifying, Sir Charles has at public meetings frequently used this gift in the cause of charity. At the opening of Wyndham's Theatre in 1899, he came before the curtain and made a memorable speech announcing that he

was enabled, by the generosity of the audience, to hand over no less a sum than £4000 to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association. He also made a delightful speech at his farewell performance at the Criterion—again handing over to charity the entire proceeds of the evening; and to the members of the O. P. Club, on the occasion of his knighthood in 1902. Always enthusiastic and persuasive, he is never more so than when speaking in the cause of charity, and many times he has infected his hearers to such an extent that they have risen up and on the spot doubled their subscriptions and promised donations. He is keenly interested in theatrical charities, especially the Actors' Benevolent Fund, of which he is now president in the room of the late Sir Henry Irving, and on the occasion of his presiding at the last annual dinner his eloquence resulted in the record addition of over eighteen hundred pounds to the fund. He is continually working to promote its prosperity and usefulness.

It is surely unique to find a famous actor addressing a roomful of medical students in the double capacity of medico and actor, as Sir Charles did on October 1, 1903, in the Anatomical Theatre of the Charing Cross Hospital. The occasion was a distribution of prizes and certificates, which he accomplished with his usual tact and the debonair manner that he does not reserve entirely for the stage. Afterwards he delivered a most eloquent and thoughtful address, in which he referred to his student days in London. A few words that were addressed to the medical

students before him, but which embody Wyndham's advice to any student in any profession, may well be quoted: "Gentlemen, my first counsel to you may seem commonplace—most good advice is. I would urge you to put before and above everything else the primary virtue of loyalty to your profession. I don't mean mere sticking to one another; valuable as this quality is, it may mean or may degenerate into nothing better than trade unionism, or the slavish bondage of etiquette, to the prejudice of weightier matters. I mean loyalty to the great ideals of the profession. You can't put them too high." And again: "Work is the one thing worthy of honour. It is the one thing that wins the most solid treasures that life has to give—that supreme consciousness of having put forth the best the worker has in him."

In speaking of the various actors and actresses who have fallen by the wayside in the struggle for recognition, Sir Charles is most emphatically of the opinion that no man or woman should tempt the favour of Thespis unless they have a marked and very particular aptitude for the work. To the would-be actor or actress who says lightly, "I want to go on the stage," he gives no encouragement: to the earnest, hard-working student who has talent and perseverance he is continually holding out a helping hand. He was, as we know, an actor in spite of his parents: he felt it was the one thing he could do really well, and for which he was best fitted. "From my earliest days I aspired to become



SCENE FROM "THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL," AS ACTED AT DRURY LANE IN 1906 ON THE OCCASION OF THE ELLEN TERRER PUBLICATION

Reading from left to right: Mr. George A. M. Cline, Mr. Herbert Stouffer, Mr. Allan A. Macnair, Sir Charles Wyndham, Mr. Frederick Kerr, Mr. George Giddens, Mr. Ben Webster, Mr. Weldon Crossmith, Mr. Ben Davies

From a photograph by the Dover Street Studios, Ltd.

an actor, even before I knew the value of the words I used to spout. . . . I assume that if you are kind enough to listen to an actor, you will prefer that he should talk to you principally of his calling. There never has been a time when the drama has had a stronger hold on the public mind than to-day. Among all the arts it necessarily stands to the fore as the reflection of the tastes and needs of society, its passions, its sympathies, its hopes and fears, its errors and virtues. Perhaps this is pre-eminently the case in the line I myself follow, that of comedy. Tragedy deals with a man in his exceptional moods, but comedy fits society, like a skin."

In the days when he decided to throw in his lot with the players, the stage was much less attractive than now. The actor was kept severely in his place, and his place was—behind the curtain. We have heard latterly a great deal of talk about the social status of the actor, in those days he had little or none. It was rather a case of the sheep and the goats. Also, the actual conditions under which the actor worked were very poor. Here is a description of a dressing-room. "It was a bare, dark pestilent hole, with no ventilation, and no furniture beyond a few broken chairs which served with the rough benches around the walls for the artists to dress upon, and a floor that you would solemnly swear had never been scrubbed during the century or more that the theatre had been standing." How this contrasts with the cosy well-lighted, well-ventilated dressing-rooms, obtaining at most first-class theatres nowadays. We have

only to glance at the numerous portraits of Miss X. in her dressing-room, and Mr. Y. "making up," to see that instead of being hid away in the bowels of the theatre, they are now advertised and shown to the public.

A manager who has had many years' experience of the stage considers Wyndham simply wonderful in the way he detects the smallest grain of talent. It may be only a very small fragment, like a morsel of gold lying in the *débris* around the pit-head, but his eye is quick to see it, and he can invariably gauge the quality and extent of the seam beneath from a glance. It may be a vein of comedy, or it may be tragedy.

Possibly the secret of Sir Charles's youth and vitality is that he never looks backward but always ahead. It is continually what he is going to do, not what he has done. He has never been content to rest on his laurels and he never will be. He is as alert and active to-day as many an actor of half his age. "For my part," he says, "I mean in the pursuit of my vocation, to travel as long as there's steam to travel with."

In reviewing Sir Charles Wyndham's career it appears a wonderful record of successes. Each year he enhanced his reputation and broadened his art. There was no sudden rise into fame, no flash of splendour as in the case of his friend, Sir Henry Irving. It is a record of steady forging ahead somewhat rare in the profession. But then he brought

exceptional enthusiasm and invincible determination to the task, in addition to the talent which is something more than the infinite capacity for taking pains. It is easy to call the successful man "lucky" and to say that fortune has smiled upon him, but only he knows the obstacles he has fought and overcome, the rebuffs that he has endured perhaps in silence, the sick heart that he has often hid under an appearance of prosperity. To rise so quickly from the dust that the world never sees your tumble, and to take care that you tread so securely in future that you cannot be again precipitated is surely the philosophy of the successful man whom the world is accustomed to count fortunate. The actor perhaps more than any one else is a great believer in luck; he says So-and-so is lucky, So-and-so is unlucky. Wyndham and Irving once competed for an engagement at the hands of a provincial manager—they neither of them obtained it! It was given to a very inferior actor. Probably that actor was considered lucky, but Wyndham and Irving arrived all the same. Wyndham's heart has always been in his work and as Sir Francis Burnand says whatever he had to do "he was thoroughly in earnest in doing it."

At the time of the writing of this little book he is appearing nightly in a revival of *The Liars*, back in his cosy little theatre, the Criterion—playing Sir Christopher Deering with all his old sparkle and buoyancy. "Yes," he said, "I believe I did once

say that David Garrick was my favourite part. And yet I don't know; I think I enjoy my part in *The Liars* as much, if not more. It's a delightful part—a delightful play." And he says it with none of the *blasé* intonation of the actor who has played the same part over and over again, night after night, but he speaks of it with the same enthusiasm and freshness as when it was first produced many years ago. It is this buoyancy and whole-hearted enjoyment in his work that makes his performance so delightful and rare a thing. It is not so much work for which he is well paid as work that he loves. And he communicates this feeling to his audience. He enjoys playing to them, and gives them of his best; they enjoy watching him. When he comes on the stage he quickens the whole play into life, like a match to a ready laid fire, just as when he enters a drawing-room and looks round him in his bright, interested way, with a smile for one and a warm hand-clasp for another, some fresh current of life seems to have entered the room and vitalised it.

One day the conversation turned on Bernard Shaw, and Sir Charles was asked if he had ever contemplated appearing in a Shavian play. Sir Charles gave a reminiscent smile, which broadened into a little chuckle. "Oh, yes, Bernard Shaw was very anxious for me to appear in some of his productions. I remember his coming to me some years ago to read me one of his plays. We greeted one

another and sat down, one each side of a little table. There seemed to be no sign of a play in his hand. Presently he put his hand in his breast pocket and produced a small note-book, which he placed upon the table. Then he dived into another pocket and produced another note-book, a little bit larger than the first. He proceeded in this fashion to ransack his pockets until no less than seven small note-books lay upon the table. "That's the play," said Mr. Shaw complacently. "I always write my plays on the tops of buses, so I have to use note-books." This particular play was *The Philanderer*, and no one can doubt that Sir Charles would have made an ideal philanderer, but he was at that time playing a somewhat similar part, although in a very different play—*Brighton*. Sir Charles thought the public would have had enough of him as the fickle vacillating lover by the time the run of *Brighton* was concluded. But he has watched Mr. Bernard Shaw's career with the greatest interest, and never neglects an opportunity of seeing the Vedrenne-Barker productions.

We will conclude by quoting once more, this time the words of a well-known critic who writing of Sir Charles says : "Now, as in the eighties of the last century, he shines by the refinement of his style, the subtlety of his sense of humour, the distinction, the effective verve of his diction . . . Always the same, yet always different. The sameness is his birthright, which ordains that good breeding knows but one

level, the difference is the outcome of his keen observation of the peculiarities, the manners, and the speech of different social strata."

But after all no words can convey the spell cast by a great actor and no one who has not seen him can know "Sir Charles."

LIST OF PLAYS

PRODUCED AND ACTED IN BY SIR CHARLES
WYNDHAM SINCE HIS OCCUPANCY OF
THE CRITERION THEATRE, 1875

CRITERION THEATRE

- 1875 Brighton
The First Night
- 1876 The Great Divorce Case
Hot Water
- 1877 The Pink Dominoes
- 1879 Truth
- 1880 Where's the Cat ?
- 1881 Butterfly Fever
Foggerty's Fairy
- 1882 Fourteen Days
- 1884 The Candidate
- 1886 Wild Oats
David Garrick
- 1889 Still Waters Run Deep
The Headless Man
- 1890 She Stoops to Conquer
Delicate Ground
Sowing and Reaping
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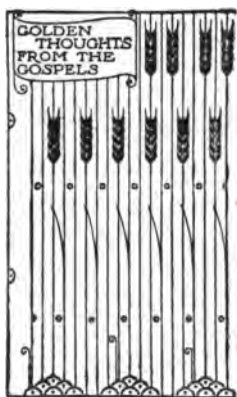
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